Increasing Completion at Rural Colleges through Collaboration

Stephanie Beaver, Special Programs Counselor
Michael Igoe, Director or Student Access, Retention, and Success
Brandon Price, Dean of Student Services
Kristin Rascon, Student Equity Researcher
In this strategy session:

• Comparison of completion rates in California Community Colleges

• Examination of factors that discourage completion at rural colleges

• Discussion of how to leverage collaborations to increase student success
First we want to know about you

What size college do you come from?

0 – 4999
5000 – 9999
10000 – 14999
15000+
Columbia College

College Headcount $= 4,009$ (15-16)

Tuolumne County Population $= 53,804$ (2016)
Why were we interested in examining completion rates at rural colleges?

Our problem

Columbia College students have relatively high course completion rates but low six year completion rates compared to students statewide.
## Statewide

### Completion

Percentage of degree, certificate and/or transfer-seeking students starting first time in 2010-11 tracked for six years through 2015-16 who completed a degree, certificate or transfer-related outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COLLEGE PREPARED</th>
<th>UNPREPARED FOR COLLEGE</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>47,962</td>
<td>149,758</td>
<td>197,720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Columbia College

### Completion

Percentage of degree, certificate and/or transfer-seeking students starting first time in 2010-11 tracked for six years through 2015-16 who completed a degree, certificate or transfer-related outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COLLEGE PREPARED</th>
<th>UNPREPARED FOR COLLEGE</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What we wanted to know

• Do students at other rural colleges have lower completion rates than their peers statewide?

• What are the factors that discourage completion at rural colleges?
Rural and Non-rural completion rates

Using data from the Scorecard we conducted comparison of statewide completion rates among rural college students and their peers.
Rural and Non-rural completion rates

Colleges with under 100,000 people within 30 miles of the college were classified as “rural”.

Rural and Non-rural completion rates

We wanted to know ......

To what degree do completion rates vary between students at rural California Community Colleges and their peers at other California Community College.
The results

The results suggested that students enrolled at “rural” colleges were less likely to “complete” than their peers at other California Community Colleges.

Completion rates for rural and non-rural students who first enrolled between 2005—06 and 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>California Community Colleges (N)</th>
<th>Students (N)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Completion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28,874</td>
<td>11,967</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non–Rural</td>
<td>101*</td>
<td>919,576</td>
<td>446,981</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rural and Non-rural completion rates

- We tested some hypotheses as to why students at rural colleges had lower completion rates.

- One of our hypotheses was that rural institutions have a larger proportion of students from disadvantaged populations including veterans, foster youth, and students with disabilities.
Rural and Non-rural completion rates

The results indicated that rural colleges had a greater proportion of students identified as veterans, foster youth, and students with disabilities.

Table 1: Proportion of Students Identified as Veterans in California Community Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>California Community Colleges (N)</th>
<th>Students (N)</th>
<th>Number of Veterans N</th>
<th>Ratio of veterans to Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>179,908</td>
<td>3,920</td>
<td>1 in 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-rural</td>
<td>101*</td>
<td>1,409,084</td>
<td>25,993</td>
<td>1 in 54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Proportion of Current or Former Foster Youth in California Community Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>California Community Colleges (N)</th>
<th>Students (N)</th>
<th>Number of Foster Youth N</th>
<th>Ratio of students to each Foster Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>179,908</td>
<td>2,203</td>
<td>1 in 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-rural</td>
<td>101*</td>
<td>1,409,084</td>
<td>15,065</td>
<td>1 in 94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Proportion of Current or Former Foster Youth in California Community Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>California Community Colleges (N)</th>
<th>Students (N)</th>
<th>Number of DSPS Participants N</th>
<th>Ratio of students to each DSPS Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>179,908</td>
<td>9,245</td>
<td>1 in 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-rural</td>
<td>101*</td>
<td>1,409,084</td>
<td>66,248</td>
<td>1 in 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rural and Non-rural completion rates

Do students at rural colleges take fewer units due to limited course availability or other factors.

The Results

*Columbia College First Time students enrolled in an average of 9.49 units compared to 10.15 units for MJC students.*
We also found that:

Columbia College students were over 5 times as likely to take 12-14 units as they were to take 15 – 17 units.
We tested some hypotheses as to why rural completion rates are lower.

Such as, distance from campus is negatively correlated with student persistence.
We are developing and implementing strategies to address our low completion rates.
Strategies for Addressing Low Completion Rates

• Developing a workgroup to examine barriers to completion and propose strategies for increasing completion rates

• Increase student participation in Educational Planning
Strategies for Addressing Low Completion Rates

• Improving Student Placement

• Provide students greater access to courses while reducing course cancellations
Strategies for Addressing Low Completion Rates

• Developing clearer guides and pathways to completion

• Promoting dual enrollment and developing college and career pathways for high school students
Strategies for Addressing Low Completion Rates

• Encouraging full-time students to complete 30 units per year

• Leveraging campus, district, and community partnerships
Your turn!

In your group develop a logic model to address a challenge or barrier to student completion.

Step one: Identify a challenge or barrier to student completion you want to address?
Developing a logic model for increasing completion

Components of a logic model

- **Challenge**
- **Inputs / Resources**
- **Activities**
- **Outputs**
- **Outcomes**
Why is Collaboration Key to Our Efforts to Increase Student Completion?

Rural colleges often experience diseconomies of scale.

This makes it vital for rural colleges to leverage campus and community resources.
Campus Collaborations
*Focused Inquiry Groups*

District Collaborations
*Professional development, EPI, eLumen*

Statewide Collaborations
*Online Education Initiative*

Community Collaborations
*AEBG, Dual Enrollment, Incarcerated, Promise*
Example: Collaborating to Improve Outcomes for Current and Former Foster Youth
The Challenge:
Columbia College’s Student Equity Research indicated that foster youth were disproportionately impacted in course success and retention.
Serving Foster Youth through Collaboration: Partnerships

1. Identify how Foster Youth (FY) are being served on the college campus
2. Identify how FY are being served in the community
3. Identify present partnerships (campus-based & in community)
   a. Partnership exists- to what degree? (communication, mutual goals, formal/informal interaction, meetings, strategies, interaction, etc)
   b. Areas of Strength & Vulnerability
4. Identify potential partnerships (campus-based & in community)
5. Prioritize needs
6. Take action:
   a. Communication (personal, email, phone, at meetings, networking)
   b. Begin strengthening, maintaining, developing partnerships
Examples of Campus Collaborations:

• Counselor position funded through numerous programs
  • EOP&S, TRiO SSS, Student Equity
• EOP&S: application questions revised, priority consideration for FY/Former FY
• Admissions & Records: rewording application, having immediate emails set-up
• Financial Aid: Chaffee Support, dispersement, monitoring, SAP/completion
• Classroom visits (First-Semester Experience, Guidance classes, etc.)
• Foundation: Mini grant and grant support
• “Special Programs”- collective of student services programs sharing staff, strategic efforts to streamline services to students
• Getting creative: example of funding peer mentoring positions
Examples of Community Collaborations:

• K-12 County Superintendent Office Foster Youth Council (K-12 site FY Liaisons)
• County Child Welfare Services Liaison, Events, ILP Coordinators
• County Probation
• County Behavioral Health (Case Managers, Recovery, Drug Court, Recently Incarcerated, LMFTs, Full Partnership Plus)
• Local Tribal Educational Programs, Tribal TANF, Recovery Programs
• County Office of Education Mentor Program
• County Transit
Example: Collaborating to Improve Outcomes for Veterans
The Challenge:
Columbia College’s Student Equity Research indicated that Veterans were disproportionately impacted in access.
Columbia College Created a focused Inquiry Group to Address the Needs of Veterans
Rural Veteran Needs

• Post 9/11 GI Bill doesn’t address additional needs of rural students
  • Wifi/internet access sporadic throughout region
  • Difficulty communicating needs/obtaining resources
    • Seeking independence in problem-solving: reinforced cultural urge to go it alone
    • Radio silence between terms can mean up to 4 months hiatus over Summer
    • Textbooks not even searchable until 2 weeks before classes, sometimes not available until 1st day of classes
Rural Veteran Needs

- Transportation challenges
  - Multiple trips to campus for ed plan, financial aid, certification, etc. might be up to 1.5 hrs each way
  - Gas Cards
  - Bus Passes

- Rural veterans are a financially disadvantaged group amongst veterans due to BAH disparities
  - FT student commuting to Livermore, Las Positas College: $3495/mo.
  - Stanislaus FT student attending Modesto Junior College: $1520/mo.
  - Tuolumne/Calaveras FT student attending Columbia: $1640/mo.
Collaborating to Increase Rural Veteran Access

Elevating veterans’ issues within the college

- Recurring roles and inclusion in associated students’ activities: Actively engage
- Regular dialog with Veterans’ Club advisory group where they can freely discuss concerns with direct line to administration: Continuously address concerns

Resource fairs held on campus monthly

- Leverages shared outreach between County VSOs, VA Palo Alto Healthcare, etc.
- Opportunity to begin/follow-up on disability claim(s) and get limited on-site health screening

Offer required textbook voucher

- Supplement textbook stipend for all certified veterans except Ch. 31 (books direct-billed to VA)
- Veterans who have exhausted entitlement or aren’t using benefits
Collaborating for Veteran Advocacy

• Sustain & promote greater veteran access and support on campus
• Recently joined the CCC Veterans’ Caucus to stay informed on Veterans Issues at statewide level
• Sacramento visits during assembly and senate Veteran/Community College advocacy days
• Student Veterans of America (SVA) Pros & Cons
  • Information, conferences, grants & scholarships
  • Close partnership with VFW for lobbying Congress
  • Student-dependent for leadership
  • Not always aligned with CCC priorities/agendas
Thank You!