Student Support (Re)defined

What students say about the support they need to succeed

Student Senate for CA Community Colleges
February 3, 2013

Presenters
Kelley Karandjeff, EdM
Rogeair Purnell, PhD
Agenda

- What is Student Support (Re)defined?
- What have we found so far?
- What do students need to hear and what are the best ways to share this research with them?
Session outcomes

Participants will:

- Learn about six factors that support students’ success and discuss how they relate to your experience
- Hear what students in this study say is most important to their progress and achievement
- Discuss how the RP Group and SSCCC could share this information with other students
OVERVIEW OF STUDY PURPOSE, DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

What is Student Support (Re)defined?
Student Support (Re)defined

- 3-year study supported by the Kresge Foundation
- 3 phases of research
  - Student perspectives (Year 1)
  - Practitioner perspectives (Year 2)
  - Dissemination (Ongoing, Year 3)
- Action research design
- Mixed-methods methodology
General research question

In an environment of extreme scarcity, which student support activities can be delivered inside and outside of the classroom to improve success for all students, paying special attention to African-American and Latino learners?
Participating colleges
Study participants

- Survey: 785 students (12 CCCs)
  - 36% current students, 32% completers, 32% leavers
  - 30% first generation
  - 32% white, 31% Latino, 25% African-American, 12% other

- Focus groups: 102 students (4 CCCs)
Your experience

- What do you think is most important to your success as a student?
## Six success factors

### Directed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Your Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students have a goal and know how to achieve it</td>
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Six success factors

**Focused**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
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| Students stay on track—keeping their eyes on the prize | }

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Student Support (Re)Defined | SSCCC Meeting | February 2013
Six success factors

Nurtured

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students feel somebody wants them to succeed as a student and helps them succeed</td>
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## Six success factors

### Engaged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students actively participate in class and are involved in extracurricular activities</td>
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</table>
## Six success factors

### Connected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td>Students feel they are part of the college community</td>
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# Six success factors

## Valued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students’ skills, talents, abilities and experiences are recognized; they have opportunities to contribute on campus and feel their contributions are appreciated</td>
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SUMMARY OF STUDENT PERSPECTIVES RESEARCH

What did we find?
Directed: Key Findings

**Having direction...**

- Identified by students as **top driver of achievement & top success factor**
- Impacted significantly by counselors and **faculty** who help with goal selection, ed plan development and monitoring progress
Directed: Students’ Suggestions for Action

- Organize peer-led educational planning through student leadership groups (students)
- Provide career exploration and discipline-specific advising (faculty)
- Direct more intrusive outreach to first-generation and undecided students (administrators)
Focused: Key Findings

**Being focused…**

- Prioritized by students as **most important to their success**
- Defined as…
  - Having self-motivation
  - Doing the work required
  - Managing time effectively and efficiently
Focused: Students’ Suggestions for Action

- Seek out your own information on the requirements for your desired goal including what classes to take and when; check multiple sources (students)
- Encourage each other to accomplish your individual goals (students)
- Connect students with special programs (counselors & support staff, faculty)
- Develop resources that enable students to track your progress towards your goals (administrators)
Nurtured: Key Findings

Feeling nurtured…

- Prioritized by students as a top success factor (after focused)
- Cited as a critical motivator of academic progress
- Often linked to other factors of success
- Fostered in a range of ways—both small gestures and more comprehensive approaches
Nurtured: Students’ Suggestions for Action

- Offer direct and tangible academic support (faculty)
- Ensure students understand course material (faculty)
- Know students’ names (faculty)
- Communicate and demonstrate to students that you care about their success (faculty, counselors, staff, administrators)
Engaged: Key Findings

Being engaged...

- Happens inside and outside of classroom
- Significantly influenced by teachers
- Is not always recognized as important by students (and needs to be)
Engaged: Students’ Suggestions for Action

- Mentor your peers (students)
- Join student clubs and organizations (students)
- Offer challenging classes with hands-on, real world applications (faculty)
- Allow students to provide feedback (faculty)
- Encourage students to utilize academic supports and ensure adequate access to these resources (faculty, administrators)
Connected: Key Findings

Feeling connected…

- Goes hand-in-hand with being engaged
- Most often facilitated by faculty
- Is more important to younger students
- Potentially limited by community college setting
Connected: Students’ Suggestions for Action

- Form study groups (students)
- Proactively meet people in class and exchange contact information (students)
- Promote your community college as a place of pride and worth in students’ postsecondary experience (administrators, faculty, staff, counselors)
- Show students what makes you feel connected to the college (faculty)
Valued: Key Findings

Feeling valued...

- Happens in a range of ways
  - Performing community service
  - Providing feedback to instructors, college
  - Sharing family history, culture and traditions
  - Mentoring other students
  - Taking leadership roles
Valued: Students’ Suggestions for Action

- Share your own professional, educational and life experience with other students (students)
- Provide community service and leadership opportunities (administrators)
- Offer venues where students can share their family history, culture and traditions (faculty, administrators)
- Recognize students’ potential and encourage them to use their skills, abilities and experience to help others (faculty, counselors, staff, administrators)
Supporting Different Populations

- **Leavers:**
  - Were less likely to say the six success factors were important to their achievement
  - Often planned to return

- **African-American, Latino & First-Generation College Students:**
  - Cited inadequate academic support and financial aid as impacting their persistence
  - Indicated connections with peers were important to their learning but often spent time alone on campus
  - Prioritized being valued and contributing to their campus
Key Themes

1. Colleges need to **foster students’ motivation**.

2. Colleges must **teach students how to succeed** in the postsecondary environment.

3. Colleges need to structure support to **ensure all “six success factors” are addressed**.

4. Colleges need to **provide comprehensive support to historically underserved students** to prevent the equity gap from growing.

5. Everyone has a role to play in supporting student achievement, but **faculty must take the lead**.
YOUR PERSPECTIVE

How can we share this research with other students?
Questions

- What information from this study should students know?

- How do you think we should present it?
Questions to Consider

- What can the SSCCC do with these findings? How can this research help support your work?

- What are other ways that the RP Group and the SSCCC might work together in the future?
Next steps

Phase 2

• Sharing these findings among a variety of constituent groups

• Facilitating dialogue about the findings (convenings)

• Identifying related practices that can be sustained and scaled in a cost-effective manner
For more information

Student Support (Re)defined website
http://www.rpgroup.org/projects/student-support

Dr. Darla Cooper, Project Director
dcooper@rpgroup.org

Kelley Karandjeff, Senior Researcher
kkarandjeff@rpgroup.org

Rogeair Purnell, Senior Researcher
rpurnell@rpgroup.org
Thank you!