COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP FORUM

Meeting the Completion Challenge

Targeting High-Return Student Success Strategies

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Community College Leadership Forum Publication Information

Meeting the Completion Challenge (24967)
Targeting High-Return Student Success Strategies

Serving Executives Across the Institution

The Community College Leadership Forum provides the president and senior executives with expert advice and innovative strategies for tackling their most pressing issues. Rather than reinventing the wheel, our members benefit from the learning of thousands of other institutions facing similar challenges within academic affairs, student services, and business administration and finance. Forum membership supports leaders across the institution through unlimited access to research conducted within the Community College Leadership Forum as well as research conducted on behalf of the following programs:

Academic Affairs Leadership Council

Supports provosts and the institutional leadership team on issues central to the academic and research mission. Areas of expertise include improving student access, retention, and learning outcomes, as well as strategies for maintaining research and teaching excellence in the current funding environment.

Student Affairs Leadership Council

Supports student affairs executives and their teams across the myriad activities and services that shape the student experience on campus. Areas of expertise include student mental health, supporting veterans on campus, and maintaining the student experience in difficult times.

Business Affairs Leadership Council

Provides advisory services to university business officers and the broader finance and administration departments including finance, human resources, facilities, and information technology, among others. Areas of expertise include cost reduction, revenue enhancement, metric selection, and dashboarding.

Continuing, Professional, and Online Education Forum

Provides breakthrough-practice research and market intelligence to help institutions develop and grow continuing, professional, and online education programs. Areas of expertise include adult student retention, industry insights, and social media.

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For additional information on our offerings please contact our team at beyond@advisory.com

Available Within Your Community College Leadership Forum Membership

In recent years, the Community College Leadership Forum has developed additional publications related to the challenge of improving completion rates. Selected resources are shown here. Complete copies of these resources are available on our website: www.educationadvisoryboard.com/cclf/library.asp

Transfer Incentives for Associate Degree Completion (2012)

What incentives are in place to encourage students to complete an associate degree and transfer to a public four-year institution? What obstacles do administrators encounter while negotiating articulation agreements or transfer incentives? How do they overcome these obstacles? What impact have articulation agreements had on completion rates for associate degrees and on transfer rates to four-year institutions?

Responding to the Completion Agenda: Services and Strategies for Improving Completion Rates (2011)

How have senior student affairs leaders responded to the challenges of the completion agenda? How are divisions of student affairs and divisions of academic affairs collaborating to encourage student retention and graduation? What programs have institutions created to support student success and completion? How are institutions aligning strategic planning efforts with the goals of the completion agenda?

Encouraging Retention, Graduation, and Long-Term Success Among Minority Male Students (2011)

How do institutions encourage minority male student retention, graduation, and long-term success? How do institutions structure their minority male success programs? How do institutions create a campus culture that fosters minority male success?

Cohort Programs: Facilitating Completion and Transfer to Four-Year Colleges and Universities (2010)

How have community colleges "packaged" courses and services to facilitate student completion and transfer to four-year institutions? What results have other institutions witnessed from their programs with respect to increased completion rates/transfers to four-year institutions?

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Paducah, KY

Westmoreland County
Community College
Youngwood, PA

Wharton County Junior College
Wharton, TX

Wytheville Community College
Wytheville, VA

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Top Lessons from the Study

Lofty Goals, Plentiful Worthy Ideas, Limited Funds

- **Community Colleges Emerging as Focal Point of National Completion Agenda**

  President Obama's American Graduation Initiative placed community colleges at the forefront of the national campaign to increase higher education attainment. Countless organizations, political figures, and the philanthropic community have rallied behind the President's call to action, attaching funds to student success and subjecting colleges with low graduation rates to harsh public scrutiny.

- **Despite Inherent Unfairness of Current Metrics, Leaders Dedicated to Graduation Gains**

  Federal graduation measures fail to capture the success of the diverse student populations found at two-year institutions, painting an incomplete picture of college performance. Despite this unfairness, community college leaders are dedicating themselves to step-function improvements in completion. More importantly, leaders are pioneering a cultural shift at their institutions, moving from a focus on open doors to a dual emphasis on student success and access.

- **The Challenge: Navigating the Unfunded Mandate to Do Even More with Less**

  There is no shortage of worthy ideas in the student success space; within the past few years there has been a surge in the number of organizations and initiatives focused on completion. But making gains in the face of unprecedented funding cuts requires institutions to invest selectively in completion strategies, devoting resources to only the most promising practices.

- **Our Efforts: Spotlighting Completion Strategies with Greatest Return on Investment**

  To assist members with this navigational challenge, the Education Advisory Board examined thousands of student success practices, assessing each practice's impact on student attainment as well as its ease of implementation. This publication spotlights what we consider to be the highest-priority practices—strategies that dramatically improve completion through relatively low-cost policy changes, recalibration of existing resources, and/or initiatives that attract foundation funding and private donations.

- **Four Main Areas Deserving of Presidential Focus**

  - *Design Student-Centric Financial Aid Services*

  - *Model Successful Academic Behavior*

  - *Cycle-Compress Remedial Education*

  - *Create Accelerated and "Stop-and-Start" Completion Paths*

Design Student-Centric Financial Aid Services

Education Advisory Board research identifies financial distress as the primary reason that community college students discontinue their education. At the same time, 42% of Pell-eligible community college students fail to apply for federal aid—nearly twice the percentage of any other student group. Recognizing that high-quality financial assistance drastically improves student retention, completion-driven colleges are focusing on their financial aid office.

- **Co-Locate Financial Aid and Other Student-Facing Support Services for "One-Stop Shopping"**

  At many campuses, critical support services are located far away from one another, requiring students to traverse campus to accomplish basic functions like course enrollment. The physical distance between offices hampers student access to support and also leads to mixed messaging across services. To combat the deficits of the fragmented service structure, a growing number of colleges are building a One-Stop Shop by co-locating critical student-facing services. Research reveals multiple benefits of the model: dramatic increase in student support utilization, enhanced staff collaboration across unique administrative units, and overwhelming donor support for "single roof" building renovations.

- **Centralize Back-Office Processes to Focus Frontline Staff Time on Student Consultations**

  A typical financial aid office has a lengthy must-do list, and "nice to have" activities that facilitate student access to financial resources—such as education campaigns—often fall to the bottom of the office priority list. To free staff time for productive student interactions, institutions are centralizing back-office processes through shared service arrangements and reallocation of staff duties.

- **Launch Local FAFSA Awareness Campaigns to Maximize Eligible Student Participation**

  When financial aid staff members engage in student-facing activities, we suggest that financial aid education and awareness be incorporated into their responsibilities. The prevalence of fraudulent aid offers, language barriers, and misconceptions about the aid application process deter many low-income students from completing the FAFSA.

- **Direct Students to a Financial Aid Computer Lab to Increase Staff Supporting Capacity**

  Given the complexity of the financial aid application process, many students are unable to complete an application without individualized hands-on assistance, a time-consuming activity for staff. To increase the number of students assisted, completion-driven colleges are creating a financial aid computer lab where students can complete the FAFSA, check their aid status, and ask general questions to an on-site aid assistant.

- **Create Small-Dollar Emergency Aid Fund with Bursar Holds as Key Intervention Trigger**

  For a growing population of students, a small amount of money at a time of need makes the difference between degree completion and dropping out. In an effort to retain this student population, progressive colleges are establishing emergency fund programs that award small-dollar grants (averaging around $150) to students facing unforeseen financial distress, such as a medical bill or unexpected transportation cost. Our research profiles institutions that have developed effective self-sustaining fund programs.

- **Protect and Expand Funding for Campus Employment Programs**

  Students who are employed on campus are significantly more likely to be retained than the average student, due in large part to forced exposure to institutional resources. This is in contrast to off-campus employment, an activity associated with lower academic performance and high dropout risk. Given the retention benefit (and cost savings potential), we suggest institutions fill campus job openings with student applicants at every possible opportunity.

Model Successful Academic Behavior

The open access mission of community colleges often draws students who lack the habits necessary to prosper in a higher education environment, such as solid study skills or a road map for balancing conflicting responsibilities. Our research found colleges that teach and enforce successful academic behaviors see rapid, real gains in student credential completion.

- **Eliminate Late Registration, Even If It Means Reassigning Students to Later Start Dates**

  Faculty describe late registration as "the kiss of death" due to the crippling effect that missing the first class sessions has on student performance and attainment. Recognizing the significant retention gap between on-time and late-registrants—often a 20+ point chasm—a growing number of colleges are ending the late option, directing students to programs with later start dates.

- **Make Student Success Courses Mandatory**

  Students who complete a college success course—a forum for developing skills such as effective academic planning and financial literacy—improve their odds of earning a degree. As a result, progressive colleges are helping students help themselves by making success courses mandatory for certain incoming student populations.

- **Offer Online "Learning Preference" Self-Diagnostic to Help Students Spotlight Academic Strengths and Problem Areas**

  With the support of foundation funding, several colleges have developed online programs that assess individual student learning preferences and provide customized study tips through a user-friendly portal. The self-diagnostic has been linked with improved academic performance and degree completion when paired with a success course and has proven especially effective for adult learners.

- **Build Pathway Transition Services to Get an Early Start at Instilling College-Ready Habits**

  Progressive colleges aren't waiting until students enroll to develop successful academic habits; increasingly, institutions are reaching out to at-risk students in high school by sending college staff to area high schools to prepare students for the college transition. Effective programs assist students with financial and academic planning, building early student awareness of the expectations and opportunities in higher education.

Cycle-Compress Remedial Education

Developmental education is the single greatest (and most costly) choke point in the higher education pipeline; nationally, 55% of community college entrants require remediation and only a small fraction of these students ever enroll in college-level coursework, let alone earn a college credential. To eliminate this choke point, colleges must do away with lengthy "one-size-fits-all" remedial sequences and adopt smart accelerated models that efficiently prepare students to succeed in their chosen fields of study.

- **Mainstream Upper-Level Developmental Students with Supplemental Companion Course**

  In this accelerated model, students who place into upper-level developmental coursework are able to bypass remediation and enroll directly in college-level coursework with the condition that they co-enroll in a supplemental success course. Colleges that have implemented the mainstreaming model have found developmental students rise to the challenge, performing on par with peers identified as college-ready.

- **Embrace the Undeniably Effective "Math Emporium Model"**

  The emporium model—part of the flipped classroom movement—replaces traditional classroom lecture with an interactive computer lab in which students complete personalized exercises, tutorials, and exams on computer software. This customized learning approach enables students to address their unique deficiencies, spending time on problem areas and moving swiftly through content that comes naturally.

- **Embed Basic Skills Modules Inside College-Level Technical Coursework**

  Many students discontinue remedial coursework due to the apparent disconnect between remediation and their professional goals. Progressive colleges, through programs such as I-BEST, have successfully addressed this problem by integrating basic skills training with college-level technical training, eliminating the need for years of expensive pre-college coursework.

Create Accelerated and "Stop-and-Start" Completion Paths

The conventional student trajectory from high school to community college to university to the workforce is long and disconnected, creating myriad opportunities for non-academic life to interfere with degree completion. Adult learners—a critical, fast-growing population—are especially prone to permanent interruptions along this degree path. To reduce student attrition, colleges are developing accelerated and stop-and-start credential paths to meet the needs of new student types.

- **Develop Intensive Short-Term Credential Programs with a Structured Map to Attainment**

    In the past 10 years, the number of short-term certificates earned at community colleges has almost tripled, presenting educational and advancement opportunities for new student types. However, student outcomes depend heavily on program design. Short-term programs with high success rates compel students to treat school as they would treat a job; simulating the work environment through fixed Monday-through-Friday block schedules, preset course orders and curricula, and common cohorts from entry to exit.

- **Speed College-Ready Student Completion with One-Year Associate Degrees in High-Demand Concentrations**

    Encouraged by the emergence of three-year baccalaureate degrees, a handful of community colleges have begun to offer one-year associate degrees for college-ready students. The degree programs are available in a handful of high-demand concentrations such as business administration. Early data shows that students in the one-year degree track are significantly more likely to earn a degree.

- **Design Stackable Certificates Tailored to Needs of Remedial Learners and Students Unable to Exit Workforce**

    To accelerate the attainment of remedial learners and students unable to exit the workforce for long periods of time, colleges are developing stackable certificates—a progression of for-credit technical certificates (with embedded basic skills) that culminate in a degree. Stackable certificates offer multiple entry and exit points, enabling students to return to the workforce at increasingly higher levels throughout their education.

- **Partner with Universities to Award Retroactive Associate Degrees**

    To the dismay of two-year college administrators, many students transfer to a four-year institution just shy of earning an associate, forgoing a valuable credential. In recent years, several universities have partnered with community colleges to retroactively award associate degrees to student transfers who complete the requirements for associate attainment while attending university. It is estimated that awarding retroactive degrees to all eligible students would yield, at minimum, a 15% increase in the number of associate degrees awarded in the United States annually.

- **Explore Community College Baccalaureate Offerings with State Officials as a Means of Eliminating Transfer Difficulties and Delays**

    In recognition of the increasingly important role of community colleges in higher education attainment, a growing number of states are permitting community colleges to offer four-year degrees. At the time of this publication, over 18 states are home to baccalaureate community colleges, institutions that accelerate attainment by eliminating transition difficulties from two-year colleges to four-year institutions.

Understanding Your Current Practice

The following questions are designed to guide members in evaluating their current activities. These categories should be used to spotlight tactics that map to institutional challenges.

Deepening Support Services Reach	Yes	No

Centralize Student-Facing Administrative Offices

		Yes	No
1.	Do academic affairs and student affairs administrators meet jointly to discuss retention policies and identify improvement areas?	❏	❏
2.	Are critical student-facing services (e.g., financial aid, registrar) housed in the same location on campus?	❏	❏
3.	Does the institution maintain a website for support services where students can access course information, financial aid forms, and other high-demand resources on one homepage?	❏	❏
4.	Based on CCSSE results or other survey data, are students generally satisfied with the service they receive at administrative offices?	❏	❏

Reduce Financial Barriers to Attainment

		Yes	No
5.	Are financial aid office staff required to engage in educational outreach and aid awareness campaigns?	❏	❏
6.	Is there a location on campus where students can initiate and complete the financial aid application process with hands-on assistance?	❏	❏
7.	Is the financial aid office open during evenings or weekends?	❏	❏
8.	Do staff members follow up with students who began but did not complete FAFSA?	❏	❏
9.	Does the college distribute small emergency grants to students facing unforeseen financial distress?	❏	❏
10.	Is there a formal application process for emergency grant aid?	❏	❏
11.	Are emergency grant recipients required to complete a federal financial aid application?	❏	❏
12.	Do grant administrators monitor persistence and attainment of emergency fund recipients?	❏	❏
13.	Are emergency grants distributed within 72 hours of application?	❏	❏
14.	Do grant administrators monitor persistence and attainment of emergency fund recipients?	❏	❏
15.	Can emergency grants be applied to resolve small-dollar bursar holds of high-need students?	❏	❏
16.	Are students given clear directions on how to resolve bursar holds and offered personalized support if needed?	❏	❏
17.	Does the institution offer a student employment program in addition to federal work-study?	❏	❏

If you answered "No" to any of the above questions, please turn to Chapter II: Deepening Support Services Reach on page 13.

Preparing Students for College-Level Coursework	Yes	No

Model Successful Academic Behaviors

		Yes	No
18.	Does the institution prevent course registration after the first day of class?	❏	❏
19.	Are there alternative program options for students who are unable to meet conventional course registration deadlines, such as truncated semesters with delayed registration dates?	❏	❏
20.	Does the institution offer a student success course?	❏	❏
21.	Do administrators track academic performance and completion of success course participants?	❏	❏
22.	Has the institution calculated the cost and return of the success course?	❏	❏

23. Has the institution explored making the success course mandatory for at-risk student populations? For all entering students? ❏ ❏

24. Do faculty and administrators utilize online learning tools to deliver or complement success course content? ❏ ❏

Accelerate Developmental Education

25. Has the developmental education department discussed strategies for accelerating developmental education completion? ❏ ❏

26. Are faculty incentivized to explore alternative models of basic skills delivery? ❏ ❏

27. Are students who test into upper-level developmental coursework able to bypass remediation and enroll directly in college-level coursework with the condition that they also enroll in a companion success course? ❏ ❏

28. Is the developmental math sequence offered through the emporium model of computer-based learning? ❏ ❏

29. Is the developmental math sequence divided into modules? ❏ ❏

30. Are students able to work through math modules at their own pace? ❏ ❏

31. Does the institution offer contextualized or integrated developmental education? ❏ ❏

32. Are basic skills instructors encouraged to communicate and collaborate with technical instructors? ❏ ❏

If you answered "No" to any of the above questions, please turn to Chapter III: Preparing Students for College-Level Coursework on page 41.

Developing Alternative Career Pathways   Yes   No

Shorten Track to Employment

33. Has the institution expanded short-term certificate offerings over the past 10 years? ❏ ❏

34. Prior to developing a new certificate program, does the institution identify workforce needs and future growth areas through market research and analysis? ❏ ❏

35. Do students progress through certificate programs as a cohort? ❏ ❏

36. Do certificate programs utilize block scheduling? ❏ ❏

37. Has the institution explored the possibility of a one-year associate program? ❏ ❏

38. Does the institution offer stackable certificates or other for-credit technical credentials? ❏ ❏

Connect Educational Pipeline

39. Does the college participate in dual enrollment programs with high school students from at-risk communities? ❏ ❏

40. Does the college offer transition programs with area high schools, such as financial aid workshops or pre-college advising? ❏ ❏

41. Do students receive information on university transfer programs and transition services during community college enrollment and registration? ❏ ❏

42. Has the college explored partnerships with nearby four-year institutions to offer retroactive associate degrees to student transfers? ❏ ❏

43. Has the institution discussed with state and local policy makers the possibility of expanding its offerings to include baccalaureate degrees? ❏ ❏

If you answered "No" to any of the above questions, please turn to Chapter IV: Developing Alternative Career Pathways on page 59.

I.   <mark>Completion a National Imperative</mark>

In July of 2009, while visiting Macomb Community College in Michigan, President Barack Obama announced the American Graduation Initiative. The historic proposal called for a decade of national commitment to higher education attainment, with the goal of producing an additional five million degree and certificate holders by the year 2020.

Completion a National Imperative

CollegeBoard

"Our goal is for the nation to increase the number of 24- to 34-year olds who hold an associate degree or higher from 42 percent to 55 percent by the year 2025."

"By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. Through this plan, we seek to help an additional five million Americans earn degrees and certificates in the next decade."

AACC AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

"AACC invites the nation's 1,200 community colleges to join a call to action by pledging to increase student completion rates by 50 percent over the next decade."

Source: American Association of Community Colleges, "College Completion Challenge: A Call to Action," http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Pages/default.aspx, accessed 10 Sep. 2011; Barack Obama, July 14, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Excerpts-of-the-Presidents-remarks-in-Warren-Michigan-and-fact-sheet-on-the-American-Graduation-Initiative/; College Board, "College Completion Challenge," http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/, accessed 10 Sept. 2011; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The College Board, the American Association of Community Colleges, and countless political figures have rallied behind the Initiative, calling upon higher education institutions to drastically improve graduation rates. This call to action is often referred to as the completion agenda or the completion challenge.

The completion agenda is driven by a changing economy whose health increasingly requires a greater share of the workforce to hold a higher degree.

Motivated by Widening Degree Gap
Projected Shortfall of 3 Million Graduates by 2018

Growing Unmet Demand For Associate and Baccalaureate Degree Holders

Graduates Wanted
2018

22 M
Workers with Associate or Baccalaureate Degree

5 M
Workers with Post-Secondary Certificate

Demand for Degree Holders +2.0% per Year

Degree Gap

Shortfall of 3 million degree holders by 2018

Supply of Degree Holders +1.5% per Year

1915   1990   2018
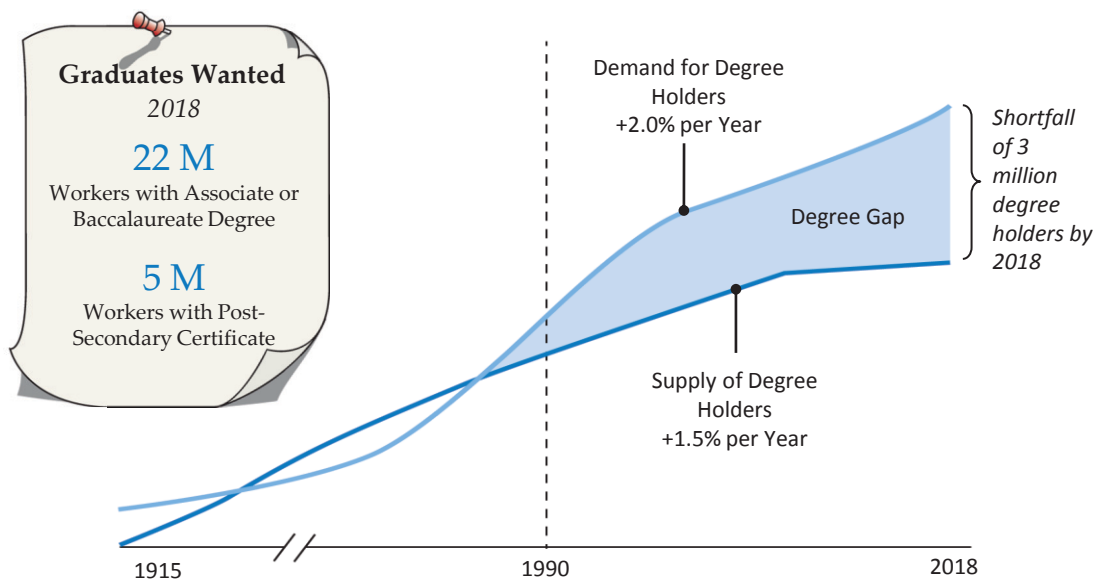
Source: Anthony P. Carnevale and Stephen J. Rose, "The Undereducated American," Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2011) ; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Data from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce shows that the United States is not producing sufficient graduates to meet market demand, leading to a projected shortfall of three million degree holders by 2018. The completion agenda is a direct response to that shortfall.

Community colleges are comparatively well positioned to boost educational attainment and prevent a shortfall of qualified workers. Compared to four-year institutions, community colleges are affordable and responsive to market demand. Further, community colleges are better equipped to meet the needs of adult learners, a subgroup whose attainment is critical to meeting completion goals.

Community Colleges Critical to Attainment Goals

Many Advantages Over Four-Year Schools But Hurt By Low Completion Rates

Community College	Public Four-Year
✓ Responsive to market demand	⊘ Slow to adjust to market needs
✓ Low cost education	⊘ Ever-rising costs
✓ Agile faculty and staff	⊘ Change-resistant academy
✓ Open access mission	⊘ Admission requirements
✓ Short-term offerings	⊘ Focused on four-year degree
✓ Support services for adult learners	⊘ Tailored to traditional age students

Completion Rate	*Completion Rate*
28%	57%
Three-Year Graduation Rate of Associate Degrees	Six-Year Graduation Rate of Bachelor's Degrees

Source: College Board, College Completion Challenge, http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/, accessed 10 Sept. 2011; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The one drawback of community colleges is the seemingly low graduation rate of attendees. According to the College Board, the three-year graduation for associate degrees is around 28%, while four-year institutions have a six-year baccalaureate completion rate of 57%.

The reported graduation rate of community college students exclusively assesses first-time-in-college students, full-time students, and three-year degree completion. At most community colleges, these qualifiers exclude the majority of the student population, therefore painting an incomplete picture of college performance.

Consequences of No Common Language
Default Measures Paint Incomplete Picture of College Performance
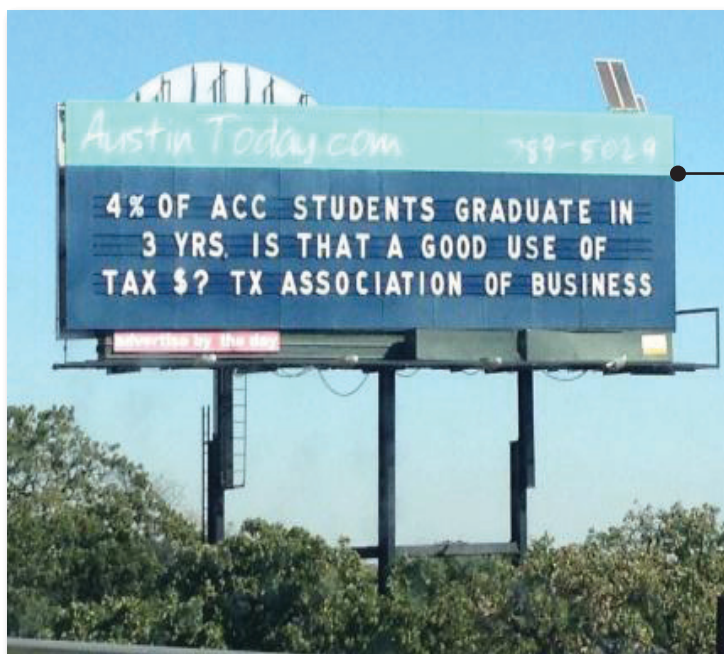
Current Completion Metrics Exclusively Assess…

- Full-time students
- Three-year graduation rates
- First-time-in-college students
- Degree or certificate completion

"There is no doubt that we need to improve completion numbers. That being said, current measures are borrowed from four-year institutions and don't fully capture community college performance—the majority of our students are part-time, working, and in need of remediation."

Community College President

Source: Texas Association of Business, "Billboard Questions Low Collee Completions," Oct. 31, 2011, http://www.txbiz.org/wcnews/NewsArticleDisplay.aspx?articleid=12, Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The absence of a more accurate performance measure has fueled misunderstandings among higher education institutions and the communities they serve. In 2011, the Texas Association of Business posted a billboard to advertise the low rate of student completion at Austin Community College. However, the 4% rate depicted on the poster—while technically accurate—tells only part of the story.

Community colleges are in the difficult position of satisfying two completion agendas and multiple, sometimes contradictory, understandings of success. College classrooms house students with diverse goals and aspirations, many of which do not include three-year associate degree attainment.

One Definition Does Not Fit All

Success Does Not Always Include Degree Attainment

Retooler	**Swirler**	**High School Student**
Working adult who enrolls for a course to refresh and/or enhance knowledge in a specific area	Student who attends a four-year institution and enrolls for a course or handful of courses	Student who enrolls for a course or handful of courses while still attending high school

Definition of Success

Retooler
- Targeted knowledge acquisition
- Maintain licensure

Swirler
- Reduced tuition
- Timely degree completion

High School Student
- Attain high-school diploma
- Introduction to college experience

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

While completion rates must and certainly can be improved, it's critical to educate the public on the many types of students who enter and exit community college classrooms. To that end, many organizations, including the Committee on Measures of Student Success, have been working toward a new set of policies that present a more accurate picture of student success at two-year institutions.

Mending a Broken Ruler

Committee on Measures of Student Success
November 2011 Draft Report

"With broad missions and a wide range of stakeholders, two-year institutions have not been served well by federal measures of student success. For many years policymakers have relied on federal graduation measures to make unfair judgments about quality at two-year institutions. More importantly, these graduation rates may be misleading to consumers…"

Recommended Changes to Federal Graduation Rate

➢ Add a part-time degree-seeking cohort

➢ Identify students who were not college-ready

➢ Include students who subsequently enroll in another institution

Source: Committee on Measures of Student Success, "Draft Report," Nov. 15, 2011, http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/cmss-committee-report-11-15-11.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The Committee on Measures for Student Success will present its recommendations to the US Secretary of Education in April of 2012. At the time of this publication, the Committee's recommendations appear to be a major improvement: adding a part-time degree-seeking cohort to IPEDS, identifying developmental students, and expanding the definition of success to include student transfers. Access to this disaggregated comparison data will help illuminate internal strengths and improvement areas as well as facilitate comparison of like institutions.

With an improved measure of college performance and the broader push for public accountability, the Education Advisory Board sees a new future for college funding. This new funding model will increasingly tie college success to student success.

A New Future for College Funding

Institution Success Increasingly Tied to Student Success

Complete to Compete

"As measures of college success become more standardized and visible to stakeholders, future college success will be increasingly dependent on improved completion rates. Institutions will compete for state funding, new students, grants, and industry partnerships; and the winners will be those institutions who are graduating their students with employable credentials."

Community College Chancellor

Performance-Based State Funding Regains Momentum

Washington
Achievement Points (2006)

Tennessee
Output-Based Funding Formula (2010)

Indiana
5% Set Aside for Credit Completion (2011)

Grants and Awards for Student Success Initiatives

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
College Award of Excellence

Students Enroll in Programs with High Success Rates

School with High Completion and Employment Rate Captures More Than Its Share of Student Tuition

Source: Crellin, Mathew, et. al., "Catalyst for Completion: Performance-Based Funding in Higher Education," New England Board of Higher Education, March 2011, http://www.nebhe.org/info/pdf/PerformanceFunding_NEBHE.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

This new future for college funding is already starting to take shape. In the past several years, performance-based state funding has begun to regain momentum. For example, Tennessee is moving away from an enrollment-based funding formula to an output-based model that puts completion front and center. New performance-based funding models have also recently been adopted in Indiana, Washington, and Ohio. In an environment with a new federal ruler and more publicly available data, the Education Advisory Board believes that more states will develop funding structures that incentivize student success.

Financial incentives for completion aren't limited to state funding formulas; increasingly, grants and awards are awarded to institutions with promising student success initiatives. Students are also becoming more discerning about where they enroll, selecting programs based on outcomes data, such as completion rates and employment prospects.

Today's college leaders face the difficult challenge of boosting student attainment while managing unprecedented funding cuts. This budget climate means that institutions must selectively invest in student success strategies, devoting resources to only the most promising practices.

But Where to Invest?

Countless Recommendations, Limited Resources

Information Overload	**Overheard Questions**
Hundreds of Publications, Thousands of Promising Completion Practices	Community College Leadership Team

"Which practices will have the greatest impact on student completion and success?"

"What strategies are cost effective?"

"Which initiatives will successfully translate to our campus?"

"How do we invest in completion while protecting our commitment to access and quality?"

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Over the past few years there has been a surge in the number of organizations and research initiatives focused on completion. These resources are invaluable, but their sheer number poses a navigational challenge. Members asked the Education Advisory Board to cull through this information overload, identifying cost-effective completion strategies with a proven impact on student success.

Over the course of this research, the Education Advisory Board analyzed thousands of student success strategies, locating each tactic on the matrix below. The chart assesses the strategy's ease of implementation as well as its impact on student attainment. The focus of this publication is the upper-right quadrant—strategies that deliver the highest return on investment.

Targeting Efforts to Maximize Return
Today's Presentation

Effectiveness of Strategy

High

Medium Return

Accelerated Certificates

Campus Employment

Math Emporium

Emergency Fund

End Late Registration

Retroactive Associate

One-Stop Shop

Mainstreaming

FAFSA Awareness Campaign

Success Course

Financial Aid Lab

High Return, Top Priority Practices

Low Return

Medium Return

Low

Low   **Ease of Implementation**   High
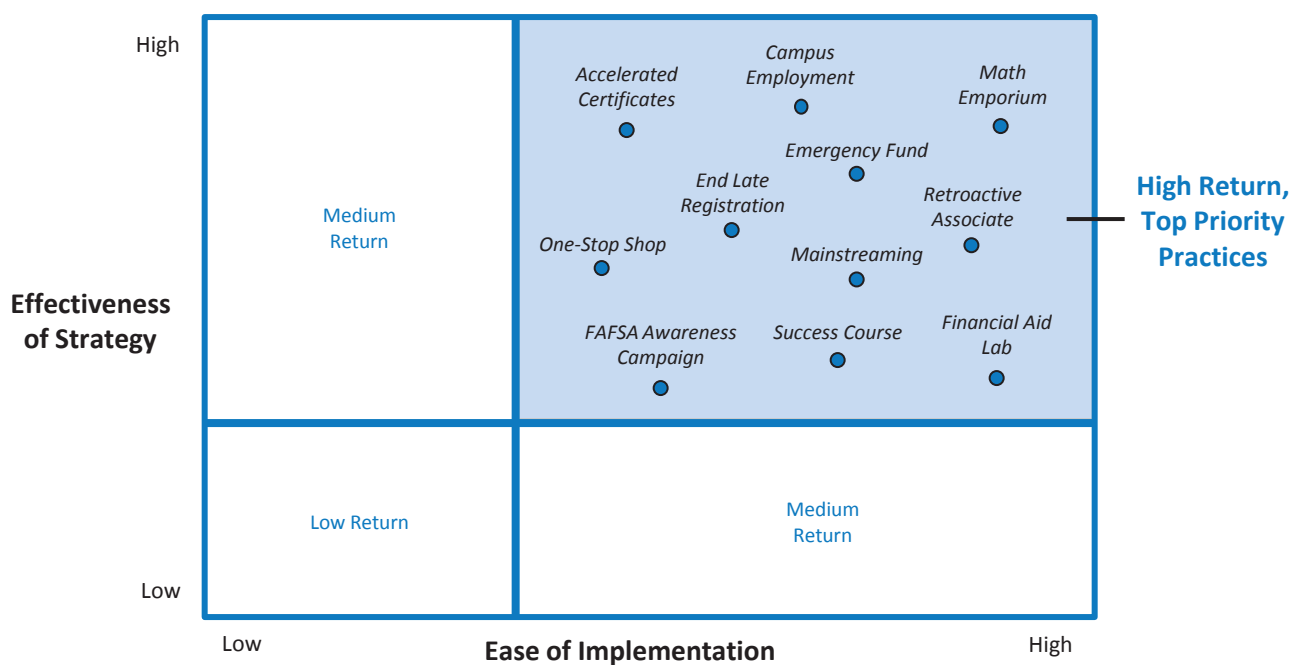
Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Framework

The high-return completion strategies profiled in this publication further one of three broad objectives: deepening support services reach, preparing students for college-level coursework, and developing alternative career pathways. Progress in each of these key areas is vital to meeting the completion challenge.

Meeting the Completion Challenge

I	II	III
Deepening Support Services Reach	**Preparing Students for College Coursework**	**Developing Alternative Career Pathways**
Centralize Student-Facing Administrative Offices • One-Stop Shop ***Reduce Financial Barriers to Attainment*** • Shared Aid Processing • FAFSA Awareness Campaign • Financial Aid Lab • Emergency Fund • Bursar Hold Resolution • Campus Employment	***Model Successful Academic Behaviors*** • Eliminating Late Registration • Student Success Course • Learning Assessment Portal ***Accelerate Developmental Education*** • Mainstreaming Companion Course • Math Emporium • Basic Skills Integration	***Shorten Track to Employment*** • Accelerated Occupational Education • One-Year Associate • Stackable Certificates ***Connect Educational Pipeline*** • High School Dual Enrollment • Pathway Transition Services • Retroactive Associate Degree • Community College Baccalaureate

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

II.   Deepening Support Services Reach

- *Centralize Student-Facing Administrative Offices*
  Practice #1: One-Stop Shop

- *Reduce Financial Barriers to Attainment*
  Practice #2: Shared Aid Processing

  Practice #3: FAFSA Awareness Campaign

  Practice #4: Financial Aid Lab

  Practice #5: Emergency Fund

  Practice #6: Bursar Hold Resolution

  Practice #7: Campus Employment Program

Institutional support services such as advising, financial aid, and registration are critical to improving student success and completion. However, many college service suites are not equipped to effectively facilitate student attainment.

Deepening Support Services Reach
Expand Access and Maximize Impact At Each Level

Key Objectives

System-Level

How should we structure service suite?

How should resources be allocated among units?

Expand Access to Services

Unit-Level

What services should we offer within our unit?

How should unit resources be allocated among services?

Maximize Impact on Success

Service-Level

How should services be delivered?
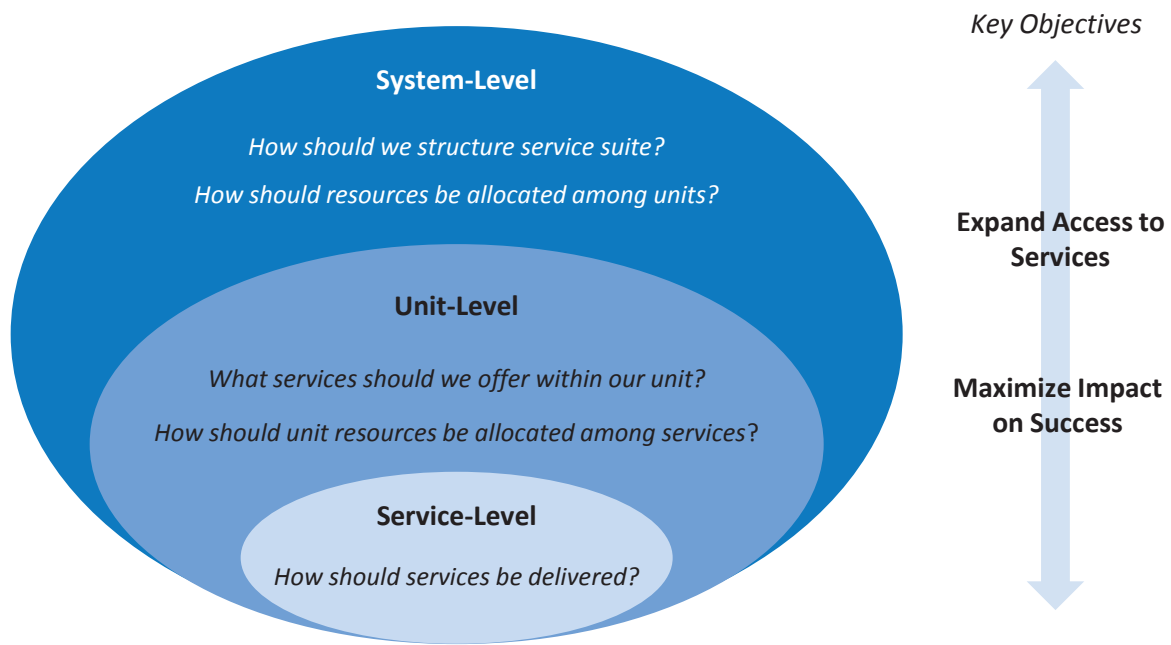
To deepen support services reach, college leaders are rethinking the design of and offerings within their student services divisions. Education Advisory Board research shows that colleges can expand student access to services and maximize the impact of these services through data-driven improvements at the system, unit, and service levels.

At most campuses, the current structure of support services does not facilitate access; the structure can even be an impediment to access. Critical support services are often located far away from one another, requiring students to traverse campus to accomplish basic functions like course enrollment.

Status Quo Service Structure
A Recipe for Dropouts

The Circle Game
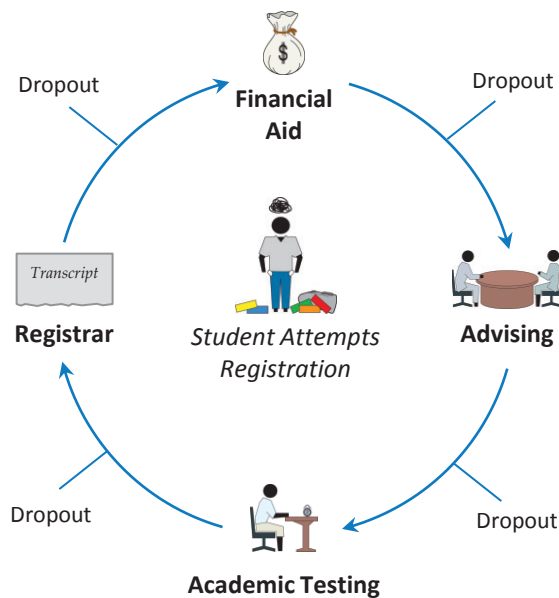
Voices from the Field
Students Express Frustration with Decentralized Services

"I tried to register for a course and was sent across campus to academic testing, then to a different complex for financial aid, then back to where I started for veterans affairs. When I arrived the office was closed. I don't know if I can take another day off to commute to campus."

"When I need to see an adviser I'm not sure who I should speak with because my questions are a mix of finance, career, and academic. I keep getting referred to different offices."

"I decided not to enroll in a second semester. I wasn't sure how to get into classes that I needed and I kept taking time off from work to navigate the registration maze."

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Current community college students explain that this decentralized structure does not incentivize utilization of support services and can also create conditions in which a student may choose not to continue with their education.

The Education Advisory Board believes decentralized service structures are the result of ever-expanding institutional mandates.

How Did We Get Here?

Decentralization a Product of Ever-Expanding Mandate and Administration

1

No Strategic Blueprint

A Winchester House of Services

Colleges continuously add offices to support new student types: veterans, ESL students, distance learners, and others

2

The Great Wall

Institutional Silos Impede Collaboration

Academic Affairs

- Academic Advising
- Writing Center
- Course Development

Student Services

- Financial Aid
- Counseling Center
- Registration

Source: Haunted Places, "The Winchester Mystery House," accessed Jan. 4, 2012; http://www.prairieghosts.com/winchester.html; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Over the past 50 years, community colleges have become home to veterans, distance learners, English as a Second Language students, high school students, and countless others. To support these new student needs, colleges add new functions (typically on top of existing infrastructures). The result is a navigationally complex web of services administered by offices with unique cultures and agendas.

Ever-expanding institutional mandates and the accompanying administrative growth also lead to institutional silos. Administrative silos are less common at community colleges than at four-year institutions. However, two-year silos do still emerge as an impediment to coordination. The most common division is that between academic affairs and student services.

Practice #1: One-Stop Shop

To combat the deficits of the fragmented service structure, a growing number of colleges are centralizing services in a single facility. The One-Stop Shop model brings critical student-facing services—financial aid, library, academic testing, advising, registrar, bursar's office—under a single roof.

System Redesign: One-Stop Shop

Centralizing Student Service Delivery at Mercer County Community College

Mercer's Renovated Student Center

Project Goals

- Bring administrative services under a single roof

- Modernize facilities to code standards

- Encourage staff collaboration and cross-training among administrative units

Funding

- 50/50 state and local shared debt service designated for capital building projects

- Private donors financed individual rooms
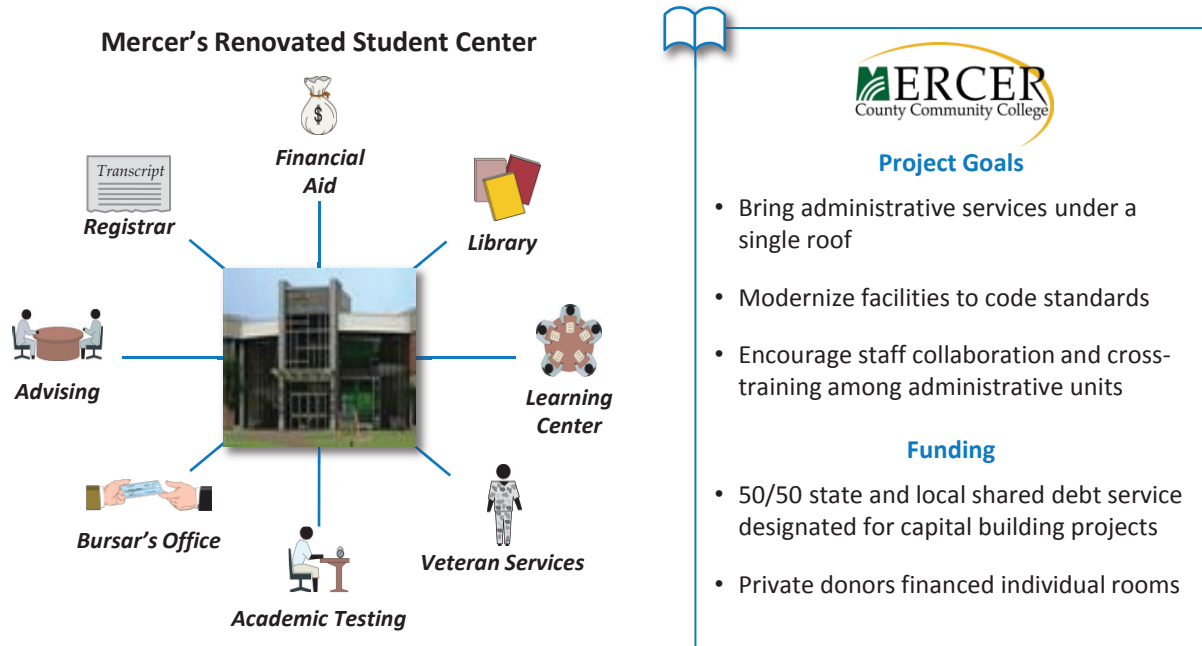
Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Mercer County Community College created a One-Stop student center in 2009. The College President, Patricia Donohue, reports that the One-Stop Shop has produced three major benefits: expanded student access to services, enhanced staff collaboration, and more opportunities for cross-training among staff from unique administrative units.

At first glance, creating a One-Stop Shop may appear difficult to implement. However, research contacts stressed the relative ease of securing financial and community support for the initiative.

Easy to Muster Support
Two Simple Strategies for Overcoming Implementation Barriers

Solicit Private Donations

"While it can be hard to fundraise to cover operating expenses, we've found overwhelming public support for capital improvement projects. Funding for the new student center was not hard to come by."

- Community College President

Communicate End Goal

"Community, faculty, and staff were fully behind the One-Stop renovation because we articulated our goals at the outset: we want to create a space where students connect with the campus and where staff silos are broken down. This is how we get there."

- Chief Business Officer

Many Institutions Now Adopting One-Stop Model

- Onondaga Community College
- Tallahassee Community College
- Suffolk County Community College
- South Texas College
- Bergen Community College
- Mercer County Community College
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- University of Minnesota

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Colleges that have recently implemented the One-Stop Shop model found overwhelming donor support for building renovations. Further, these colleges were able to secure faculty and staff buy-in by communicating the positive outcomes experienced by other institutions with a One-Stop Shop. Given the relative ease of implementation, many institutions are now adopting a One-Stop Shop for student services.

A low-cost alternative to a physical One-Stop Shop is a centralized, student-friendly virtual space. Onondaga Community College has created a One-Stop Shop website that offers convenient access to a host of student services, including course registration and financial aid forms.

A Low-Cost Alternative

Virtual One-Stop Shop at Onondaga Community College

Greater Access to Resources in Convenient, Online Format

- Register for classes
- Apply for financial aid
- Academic counseling
- Navigate campus
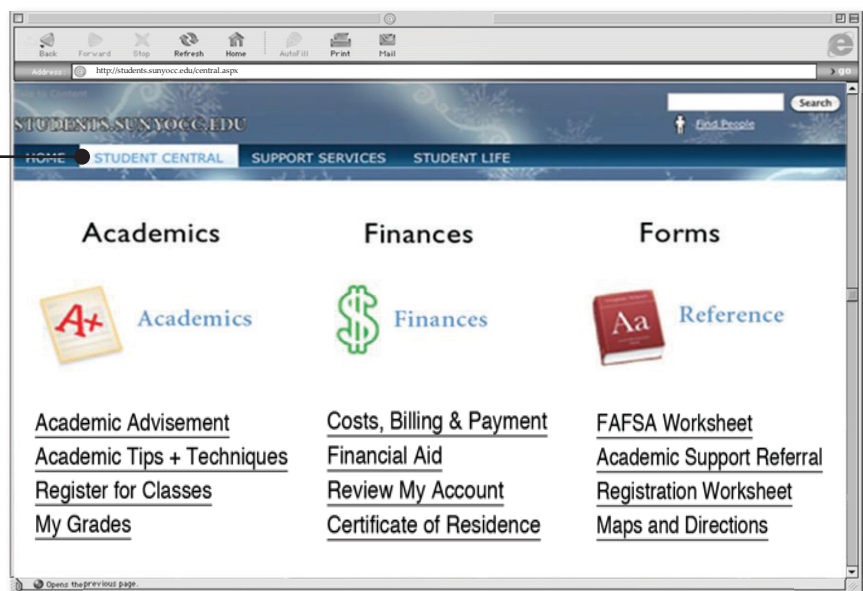
Source: "Student Central," Onondaga Community College,
http://students.sunyocc.edu/central.aspx; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The One-Stop Shop model improves student access to services, making it easier for students to find support and stay enrolled—it provides high-quality customer service. Yet there are different perspectives across higher education about how institutions should view and treat their students, with some leaders arguing that the customer service philosophy does not belong in education.

Students or Customers?

Different Perspectives Across Higher Education

Colleges are Businesses	A Pampered Population	Degrees and the Marketplace
"To deny that higher education is a product and students are customers is to duck the tough questions we should be asking."	"The 'student as customer' philosophy has created an underworked and overindulged group of future national leaders."	"Students are investing time and money with a purpose in mind. The school that does not serve that purpose will not survive."
Mark Taylor *Professor of Religion* *Columbia University*	*Richard Vedder* *Director, Center of College Affordability and Productivity*	*Stephen Trachtenberg* *President Emeritus* *George Washington University*

Source: Mark Taylor, Richard Vedder, and Stephen Trachtenberg, "Are They Students? Or 'Customers'?," The New York Times, Jan. 3, 2010, http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/01/03/are-they-students-or-customers/; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The Education Advisory Board views customer service as a key component of deepening support services reach. In recent years, three game-changing factors have placed a premium on customer service: the completion agenda, competition with the for-profit sector, and heightened student standards.

Premium on Customer Service

Game-Changing Realities
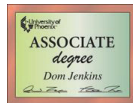
Focus on Completion

Accessible student services critical to completion goals

New Entrants

Competition for students with for-profit and online sector

Heightened Standards

"Instant access" culture heightens student expectations

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

These game changing elements do not require colleges to view students as customers in every setting. However, these factors suggest the importance of delivering high-quality service in locations where it will yield the greatest impact.

National surveys, student interviews, administrators, and retention experts identify financial distress as the primary reason that community college students fail to earn a credential. As a result, completion-driven colleges are focusing on financial aid, recognizing that high-quality financial assistance drastically improves student retention likelihood.

Prioritizing at the Unit Level
Financial Assistance Vital to Retention

Factors Contributing to Attrition at Two-Year Public Colleges

ACT

Survey of College Leaders
n=307

1. **Financial Resource Availability**
2. Courses and Programs Offered
3. Student Engagement in Class
4. Academic Advising
5. Campus Life Involvement

22. Admissions Practices
23. Quality of Teaching
24. Personal Counseling Services

Student Services Portfolio

Academic Advisement	Writing Center
Financial Aid	Counseling Services	Tutoring Center
Language Lab	Campus Safety	Disability Services
Children's Center	Chaplain	Career Services
Testing Services	International Center

Source: Wesley Habley and Randy McClanahan, "What Works in Student Retention?" ACT Survey 2004, http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/droptables/AllColleges.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Deepening the reach of financial aid requires colleges to increase student awareness of financial resources and the aid application process. At the same time, colleges must be smart with resource allocation, offering financial assistance when and where it delivers the greatest impact on student completion.

Recurring Themes in Our Research
Apply Key Objectives to Financial Aid

1	**2**
Expand Access	**Maximize Impact**
Increase Awareness of Financial Resources and Aid Application Process	*Offer Financial Resources When and Where they Count the Most*
➢ Shared Aid Processing	➢ Emergency Fund
➢ FAFSA Awareness Campaign	➢ Bursar Hold Resolution
➢ Financial Aid Lab	➢ Campus Employment

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

More so than any other Pell-eligible student group, community college students fail to apply for federal aid. Each year, community college students forgo millions in grant aid, resources proven to significantly increase student persistence likelihood.

An Untapped Resource

Community College Students Forgo Millions in Grant Aid

Percent of Pell-Eligible Applicants Who Did Not Apply for Federal Aid
2007-2008

- 42% — Community College
- 23% — Four-Year
- 2% — For-Profit
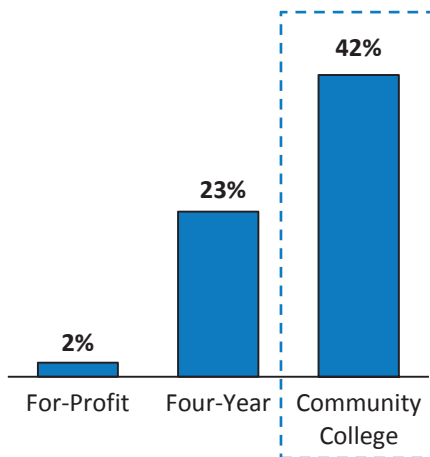
27% of community college non-applicants report a household income under $20,000

Top Factors Contributing to Failure to Submit Application

- 🚫 Misconceptions about eligibility
- 🚫 Complexity and length of Form
- 🚫 Fear of releasing sensitive information
- 🚫 Language barriers
- 🚫 Missing critical financial details

Source: The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Aid, "Apply to Succeed," September 2008, http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acsfa/applytosucceed.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Research reveals several key factors that explain students' failure to submit aid applications, including student misconceptions about eligibility, the complexity and length of application forms, and a fear of releasing sensitive financial information. Fortunately, these factors can be mitigated with education and assistance.

However, most college aid offices are not well positioned to target these problems. A typical financial aid office has a lengthy to-do list: office staff must ensure compliance with changing regulations, manage government audits, package and distribute student aid, and verify student financial information. Activities that facilitate student access to financial resources often fall to the bottom of the office priority list.

Too Much for Too Few

High-Impact Activities Fall to Bottom of Priority List

Duties of Traditional Financial Aid Office

Professional Staff   *Work-Study Assistants*

High-Priority Activities

- Ensure compliance with regulations
- Manage government audits
- Package and distribute student aid
- Verify student financial information
- Application assistance
- Financial counseling
- Outreach and awareness

Activities Expand Student Access to Financial Resources

"If Time Allows"
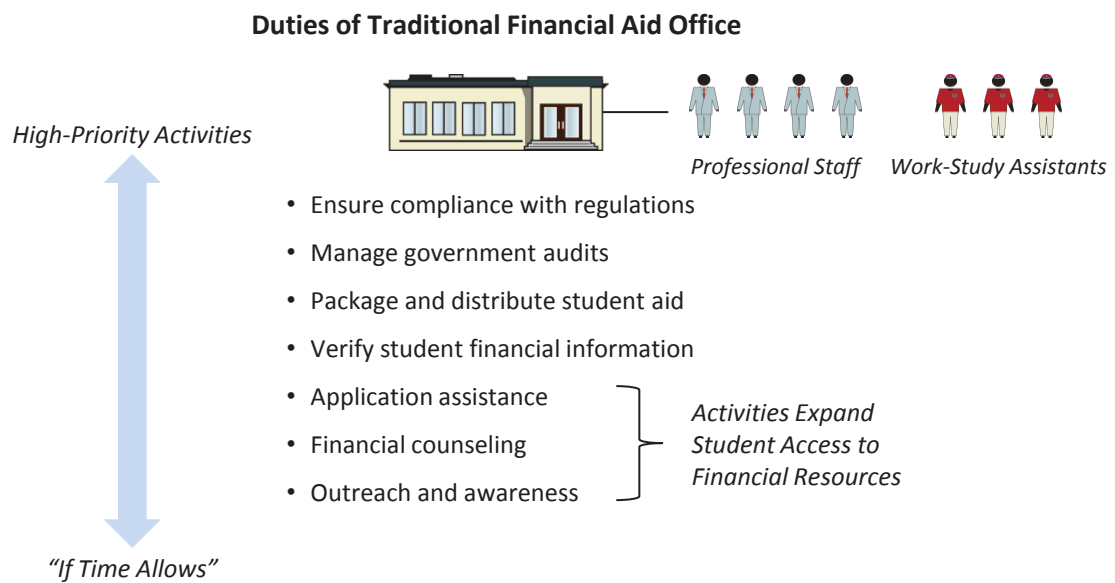
Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Practice #2: Shared Aid Processing

In 2001, the Connecticut college system tackled the "too much for too few" problem by creating a central aid office for the system's 12 colleges. The central office assumed several time-consuming back-office activities from individual campus offices, such as managing compliance and government audits. This enabled campus staff to devote time to nonessential, but high-value activities such as application assistance and educational outreach.

Centralization of Routine Processes
Frees Resources for High-Value Activities

- Manages compliance, government audits
- Uploads student application information to data system
- Policy and technical support for local offices

Connecticut System Central Aid Office

Established in 2001

IT   Counselors

Campus Aid Offices
Prioritize Counseling, Application Assistance, and Outreach

111%	102%	$2M
Increase in Students Applying for Aid, 2000-2009	*Increase in Aid Recipients, 2000-2009*	*Connecticut System Savings*

Beckie Supiano, "A 2-Year-College System Streamlines Student Aid so Campuses Can Focus on Counseling," Chronicle of Higher Education, June 2, 2009,http://chronicle.com/article/Student-Aid-Streamlined/46959/?key=HmsicAFpaCpEM3cwLnUXLndTPC56cx0pPndCZX8abFld; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The centralization of routine back-office processes in a system office has produced multiple benefits. Since the creation of the Connecticut central aid office, there has been a 111% increase in students applying for aid and a 102% increase in aid recipients. Due to efficiencies found in shared processing, the system also saves an estimated $2 million annually. The positive outcomes from the shared service arrangement have encouraged other states, such as Virginia, to model Connecticut's financial aid infrastructure.

The prevalence of fraudulent aid offers and misinformation surrounding resource availability underscore the importance of educating students about financial aid. Research conversations reveal that many potential applicants are skeptical about FAFSA or other financial aid opportunities due to negative experiences with illegitimate aid offers.

Is That Spam?

Financial Aid Education Vital to Increased Utilization

Student Receives Fraudulent Aid Offer

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Your $5,550 Pell Grant. You Prequalify!

From: pell.grantsxvvsz@sintoplist.com

From: Pell Grants
To: l35018695@sintoplist.com
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2011 4:35 AM
Subject: Your $5,550 Pell Grant You Prequalify!

Dear Yahoo! Mail User:

The US Government gives out MILLIONS of Dollars worth of $5,550 Pell Grants each year. The Best Part: You never have to pay them back!

IF YOU ARE A US CITIZEN, YOU PREQUALIFY!

Dont miss out on this AMAZING opportunity to improve your way of life! You are urged to apply TODAY as there are a limited number of $5,550 Grants given out each year.

Click Here to Apply.

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Practice #3: FAFSA Awareness Campaign

FAFSA awareness campaigns combat misconceptions about financial aid and boost aid utilization among community college students. Therefore, the Education Advisory Board suggests that colleges incorporate outreach and awareness into the formal duties of the financial aid office. College staff members are vital to community, state, and national efforts to increase the number of aid recipients.

FAFSA Awareness Campaigns Underway
College Support Critical to Outreach Efforts

PhillyGoes2College	I Can Afford College	College Goal Sunday
Philadelphia, Launched in 2011	*California, Launched in 2004*	*Nationwide, Launched in 2001*

PhillyGoes2College — *Philadelphia, Launched in 2011*

- 50+ FAFSA education workshops for students and families at community colleges and area high schools

- College Access centers offer free financial services and FAFSA completion assistance to traditional and adult students

- Campaign goal to raise FAFSA completion rate to 60% from 38%

I Can Afford College — *California, Launched in 2004*

- Outreach through Youtube videos and community events; strong coordination with campus financial aid offices

- Student-friendly FAQ website in Spanish and English

- Half of enrolled community college students attending without aid applied or planned to apply after hearing the campaign information

College Goal Sunday — *Nationwide, Launched in 2001*

- Coordinates with state access programs, local organizations, and community colleges to develop appropriate outreach strategy

- Volunteers across 40 states offer FAFSA completion assistance and financial counseling on Sunday afternoons

- 88% of participating families find the program helpful

Source: College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, "The Financial Aid Challenge," May 2010, http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/10b_1790_FAFSA_Exec_Report_WEB_1005 17.pdf; PhillyGoes2College, accessed Dec. 22, 2011; http://www.phillygoes2college.com/Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Fortunately, there are several large-scale financial awareness campaigns already under way. In 2011, Philadelphia launched a FAFSA completion campaign that sponsors educational workshops for students and their families. In California, a large-scale awareness campaign, I Can Afford College, has reached students through YouTube videos, community workshops, and events on college campuses. A volunteer-based national program, College Goal Sunday, works with state and local organizations to develop educational outreach strategies in high-need communities. All of these campaigns rely on community colleges to offer support through facilities, coordination, and financial aid office staff.
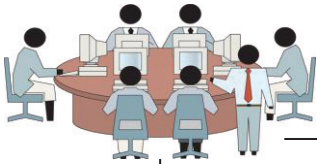
Practice #4: Financial Aid Lab 💬

Education and awareness efforts are only the first step in deepening the reach of the financial aid office and increasing student utilization of available financial resources. Given the complexity and length of the financial aid application process, many students are unable to complete an application without hands-on assistance.

Financial Aid Computer Lab Boosts FAFSA Completion
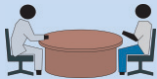
FRESNO CITY COLLEGE

Staffed by Aid Assistants

Lab Resources for Students

- Complete FAFSA
- Apply for PIN
- Check Aid Status
- General Questions

Lab enables main office counselors to focus on advisement and outreach

Lab Increases Office Efficiency and Effectiveness

Students Assisted

23,271 (2008-09)
25,366 (2009-10) +9%

FAFSAs Received

26,202 (2008-09)
31,705 (2009-10) +21%

Pre-Lab
Post-Lab
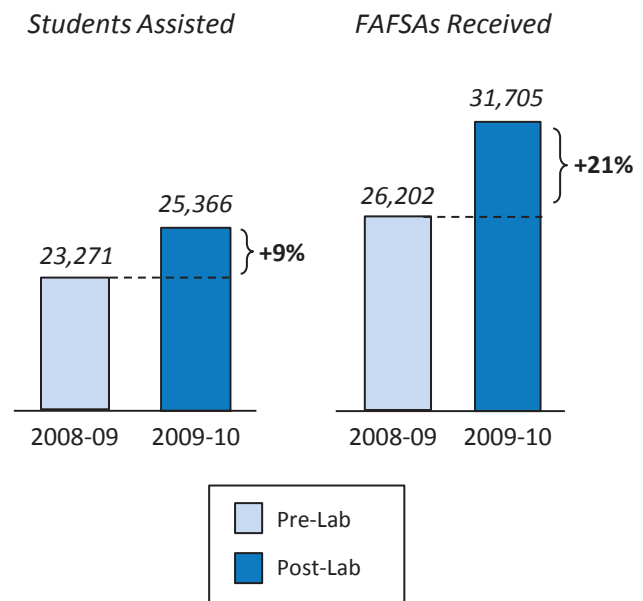
Source: Gary Nicholes, "Financial Aid Best Practices," Fresno City College, accessed Jan. 3, 2011, http://www.cccvision2020.org/Portals/0/Documents/cclc_leg_conf_2011/FinAid_SMP.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Fresno City College provides effective assistance through a financial aid computer lab: a physical location where current and prospective students can complete FAFSA, apply for a PIN, check their aid status, and ask general financial questions to an on-site aid assistant. This resource is invaluable for students without Internet access at home, individuals struggling with technical terms, and students facing language barriers. The lab also frees time for staff members in the main aid office to work with students who need in-depth financial counseling.

Just one year after adopting the computer lab, Fresno City College saw a dramatic increase in office efficiency and effectiveness: a 9% increase in students assisted and a 21% increase in complete FAFSAs received.

High-quality service at the financial aid office—through staffed computer labs or other efforts—facilitates student access to financial resources. The Education Advisory Board has compiled a list of high-ease, high-impact tactics that have strengthened frontline service at community colleges across North America.

Improving Frontline Service
Financial Aid Quick Wins
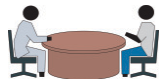
Experienced Staff at Service Desk

Station tenured staff members at student facing service desk

Convenient Office Hours

Offer weekend and evening hours to accommodate working students

Multi-Language Instructions

Develop multi-language application instructions for students and parents

Personal Reminder to File

Follow-up with students who began but did not complete financial aid application

High School Counselors

Extend service reach by training local high school counselors in aid application process

Campus-Wide Messaging

Provide financial aid forms at admissions and enrollment offices

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Strategies range from training local high school counselors to assist students with financial aid applications to providing multi-language application instructions.

Practice #5: Emergency Fund 💬

In addition to expanding student access to financial resources, colleges are taking steps to maximize the impact of financial resources on student completion. For a growing population of students, a small amount of money at a time of need makes the difference between degree completion and dropping out.

A Little Goes a Long Way

Emergency Funds Keep Students in School Through "Just-in-Time" Aid

Emergency Assistance Fund
Central New Mexico Community College

CNM›

- Grant money distributed through college foundation to students facing unforeseen financial distress

- Started in 2005 as the Rust Opportunity Fund, supported primarily through private donations

- Fund awards average around $150, with some awards as low as $12

- Students receive aid within 48 hours of application

Estimated Impact on Retention

85%

Recipients more likely to be retained

67%

First-Time Students   Fund Recipients
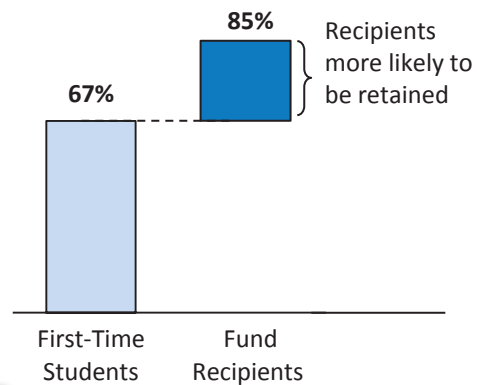
"My next step, if I didn't receive this money, was to drop out of college and get a full-time job. This program is an absolute godsend."

Valeria Otero
Emergency Fund Recipient

Source: Christian Geckeler, "Helping Community College Students Cope with Financial Emergencies," MDRC, May 2008, http://www.mdrc.org/publications/479/full.pdf; David Moltz, "Emergency Fund Proves Worth," Inside Higher Ed, Aug.6, 2009, http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/08/06/emergency; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Recognizing this need, Central New Mexico Community College established an emergency fund in 2005. The fund awards grant money to students facing unforeseen financial distress, such as a medical bill or unexpected transportation costs.

Central New Mexico distributes the emergency grants through its foundation. Individual grants average around $150, with some as low as $12. Students apply for the funds through a short application and, if successful, receive the money within 48 hours. Administrators report that the quick turnaround time is critical to the program's success.

The fund's impact on student retention is significant; 85% of fund recipients progress into the next year of their education, and many of these students credit that progression to the emergency fund. In addition to being valuable retention tools, emergency funds have the added benefit of being financially sustainable. Most community college emergency fund programs are supported entirely through private donations.

Emergency fund administrators have learned from early lessons and are making modifications to maximize the impact of their programs. Increasingly, institutions are applying emergency grants to resolve small-dollar bursar holds of high-need students.

Maximizing Impact of Emergency Grants
Lessons from Dreamkeepers and Angel Fund Colleges

Require FAFSA Completion

Connect applicants with other financial aid opportunities and require FAFSA completion

Data-Driven Improvements

Refine distribution process annually, using program data to inform decisions

Prompt Fund Dispersal

Distribute funds within 5 business days

Widespread Outreach

Advertise the program widely, through multiple media

Track Outcomes

Collect data on reenrollment and academic performance of recipients

Apply Funds to Bursar Holds

Utilize grants to resolve small dollar bursar holds of high-need students

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Practice #6: Bursar Hold Resolution

Bursar holds resulting from unpaid tuition and fees lead many students to prematurely discontinue their education. In most cases, holds can easily be resolved through a brief counseling session or an email reminder. In other instances, the underlying cause of the bursar hold is more severe. Xavier University uses a series of escalating interventions to optimize its emergency grants for serving those students with the greatest need.

Preventing Attrition From Bursar Holds

Directing Scarce Resources to the Greatest Need

Escalating Interventions

Intervention Step   Target Population

Phase One: *All students with bursar holds*
Mass Communication
• Automated e-mail
  notifications
• Effective for most
  students

Phase Two: *Students needing*
Personalized Support   *assistance to resolve holds*
• Phone or in-person
  counseling
• Discuss reasons for
  hold and potential
  solutions

Phase Three: *Students in*
Additional Funding   *financial distress*
• Emergency grant aid

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Inexpensive bursar hold interventions can have a significant impact on student retention. Xavier University estimates that the escalating intervention strategy reduces attrition rates by 5% to 8% annually.

Resolution of Holds Credited with Improved Retention
Xavier University

Number of Students with Bursar Holds
Fall 2006

- 694 — Two Weeks Prior to Registration
- 335 — Beginning of Registration
- 72 — Start of Spring Semester

Greater than 50% reduction in number of students unable to register on time for spring semester

Nearly 90% of holds cleared before spring

Estimated Impact on Retention

- 80%-83% — Estimated Retention Rate Without Intervention
- 88% — 2007 Xavier University Retention Rate

Bursar hold intervention worth 5%-8% points annually
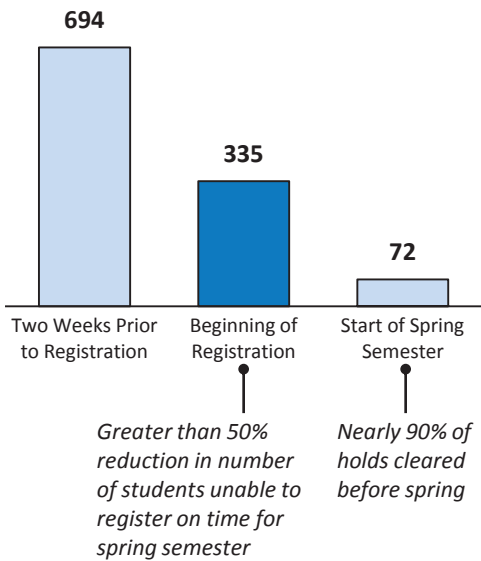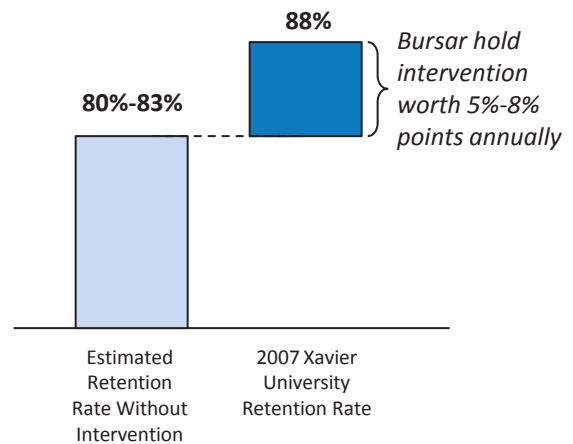
Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Practice #7: Campus Employment Program

High-impact financial resources are not limited to grant aid. Among institutions that track employment data, retention rates of students who work on campus tend to be several points higher than that of the general population.

Student Jobs Impact Persistence Likelihood
What Types of Employment Help and Hurt Retention?

Employment Can Impede Academic Success…
Mean GPA of College Students by Hours Worked

n=1787

Hours	GPA
1-10 hours	2.94
11-20 hours	2.75
21-30 hours	2.66
31-40 hours	2.63
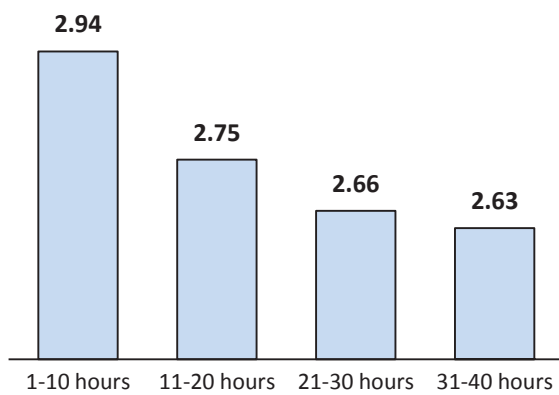
…But On-Campus Employment Can Have Positive Effect on Retention

Retention rates of students who work on campus several points higher than that of general population:

▲ 13% *Purdue University Calumet*

▲ 18% *DePaul University*

▲ 10% *St. Xavier University*

Source: Gleason, Philip M., "College Student Employment, Academic Progress, and Postcollege Labor Market Success," *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 23(2), Spring 1993; Leanord, Gillian, "A Study on the Effects of Student Employment on Retention," Purdue University Calumet, http://uc.iupui.edu/Portals/155/uploadedFiles/Deans/StudEmpRetentionRprt.pdf; Cermak, Katherine and Joe Filkins, "On-Campus Employment as a Factor of Student Retention and Graduation," DePaul University, http://oipr.depaul.edu/open/gradereten/oce.asp; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Employment research shows that students who work off-campus over 10 to 15 hours a week suffer from lower academic performance and are less likely to be retained. Retention experts report that these off-campus jobs are demanding and pull students away from the academic environment. However, on-campus employment often has the opposite effect on student persistence and academic performance.

Employing students on campus is a win-win strategy for institutions. Deborah Santiago, the policy director at Excelencia in Education, explains that students who work on campus are given critical financial support while being exposed to institutional resources. Meanwhile, institutions save by paying student salaries as opposed to benefits for permanent employees.

Multiple Benefits of Employing Student On Campus

A Win-Win Strategy

"Employing students on campus can be a very successful retention strategy as well as a cost saving measure. Students who work on campus are given critical financial support and are exposed to institutional resources. Meanwhile, the institution saves by paying for a student salary instead of a permanent employee with benefits."

Deborah Santiago
Excelencia in Education

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

There are countless venues for student employment on college campuses—libraries, cafeterias, and conference centers, to name a few. Given the myriad benefits of on-campus student employment, the Education Advisory Board encourages institutions to offer as many student jobs as possible.

Where to Look

A Checklist of Potential Campus Employment Venues

Campus Recreation
❑ Front Desk Worker
❑ Basketball Official
❑ Sport Supervisor

Dining Services
❑ Catering Team
❑ Special Event Server
❑ Maintenance Staff

Library
❑ Student Assistant
❑ Desk Supervisor
❑ IT Support

Admissions Office
❑ Tour Guide
❑ Student Ambassador
❑ PR Intern

Childcare Center
❑ Front Desk Worker
❑ Classroom Assistant
❑ Activities Supervisor

Student Union
❑ Desk Clerk
❑ Shop Assistant
❑ Communications Lead

Learning Lab
❑ Reading Coach
❑ Tutor
❑ IT Support

Student Activities
❑ Program Specialist
❑ Special Events Coordinator
❑ Social Media Specialist

Disability Services
❑ Outreach Coordinator
❑ Student Aid
❑ Tutor

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The Education Advisory Board has—and continues to pursue—additional research on deepening support services reach. The publication Hardwiring Student Success provides a detailed analysis of early alert systems and other mechanisms for developing a coordinated student services suite. In 2012, the Education Advisory Board will be publishing a study on effective academic advising models and technologies.

Topics for Another Day

Early Alert Systems

EAB Library: Hardwiring Student Success

Academic Advising

Forthcoming 2012 Publication

A Preview of Key Themes

Centralization • Accountability • Communication

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

III. <mark>Preparing Students for College-Level Coursework</mark>

❧ *Model Successful Academic Behaviors*

Practice #8: Eliminating Late Registration

Practice #9: Student Success Course

Practice #10: Learning Assessment Portal

❧ *Accelerate Developmental Education*

Practice #11: Mainstreaming Companion Course

Practice #12: Math Emporium

Practice #13: Basic Skills Integration

Practice #8: Eliminating Late Registration

Student outcomes data from colleges urban and rural, small and large, shows that missing the first day of class has lasting negative consequences—late registrants are less likely to be retained and are more likely to underperform academically relative to on-time peers.

The Kiss of Death

Missing the First Day of Class Has Lasting Consequences

Late Registrants Underperform Relative to On-Time Peers

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, 2006

n=31,702

Mean GPA

2.06   Late
2.61   On-Time

Retention Rate

42%   Late
69%   On-Time
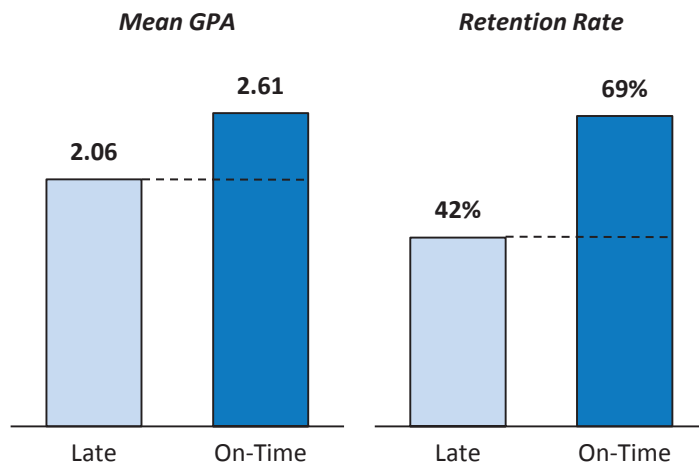
Last to Come, First to Leave

"Late registrants who miss the first course sessions are disadvantaged from the moment they enter the classroom. This group of students, often facing noncognitive barriers to success, feel disconnected from the class, unprepared, and set low expectations for their performance. In my years of teaching, these latecomers were always the first to leave.

Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Canadian Community College

Source: Lynn Tincher-Ladner, "A Review of Late Registration Participation," Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Oct. 11, 2006, http://www.mgccc.edu/factbook/reports/late_registration.pdf; Rick Rosen, "Starting in Fall, Students Won't Be Able to Register Late," DCCCD Employee Newsletter, http://www.enewsbuilder.net/dcccdi/e_article002055881.cfm?x=b11,0,w; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Data from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College illustrates the vast outcome gap between regular and late registrants. In a 2006 survey, late registrants had an annual retention rate of 42%, compared to 69% for on-time registrants—a 27-point chasm.

The underperformance of late registrants can be explained by both correlation and causation. Late registrants as a group face external challenges; they are more likely to be working while attending school and are often less familiar with what it takes to succeed in the classroom environment. For a group that faces these obstacles, missing the first day of class is especially damaging. Students who miss the first day of class are behind from the moment they enter the door. As a result, they feel disconnected and unprepared for the challenges ahead.

Recognizing the detrimental effects of late registration, a growing group of institutions has ended this option, either by removing late registration altogether, or moving the date of late registration to before the start of classes.

More Than a Passing Trend

Compelling Outcomes Gap Moves Colleges to End Late Registration

Select Colleges that Ended the Late Option

Early Movers Receive National Recognition for Improved Completion Rates

Valencia Community College

From 2006-2010 graduation rates increased by 10 percent for college-ready students and 5 percent for remedial students. These impressive results were recognized in 2011, when the institution won the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.

South Texas Community College

Since ending late registration in 2005, the college has been recognized by Achieving the Dream for raising its three-year completion rate by 4 percentage points, from 12 percent in 2005-06 to 16 percent in the 2009-10 academic year.

2003   Present

Jennifer Gonzalez, "Valencia College Wins First Aspen Prize for Community-College Excellence, Chronicle of Higher Education, Dec. 12, 2011, http://chronicle.com/article/Valencia-College-Wins-First/130091/; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Ending late registration—potentially imposing limits on access for a specific student demographic—is a bold move. However, the positive effects of the change are compelling. Two institutions that were among the first to end late registration, Valencia College and South Texas, were recently recognized for their outstanding commitment to student success. From 2006 through 2010, graduation rates increased significantly at Valencia, earning the institution the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. South Texas has also seen a marked improvement in its graduation rate. Since ending late registration in 2005, the college has been recognized by Achieving the Dream for raising its three-year completion rate by four percentage points.

To ensure access is not restricted, colleges that eliminated late registration are experimenting with alternative course models, such as mini-semesters with delayed registration deadlines. This model caters to students who are unable to register by the traditional fall and spring deadlines.

Practice #9: Student Success Course

Facilitating on-time registration is only one component of modeling successful academic behaviors. College faculty explain that enrolled students are often unfamiliar with the requirements and unique challenges of the higher education environment. As a result, many community colleges now offer a student success course to teach skills such as effective study habits, career exploration, academic planning, and financial literacy.

Teaching Successful Academic Habits

Success Course Improves Academic Performance and Attainment Likelihood

Florida Success Course Strengthens Outcomes for Both College-Ready and Remedial Students

Academic Success of Community College Students[1]
n=36,123

Legend:
- No Success Course
- Complete Success Course
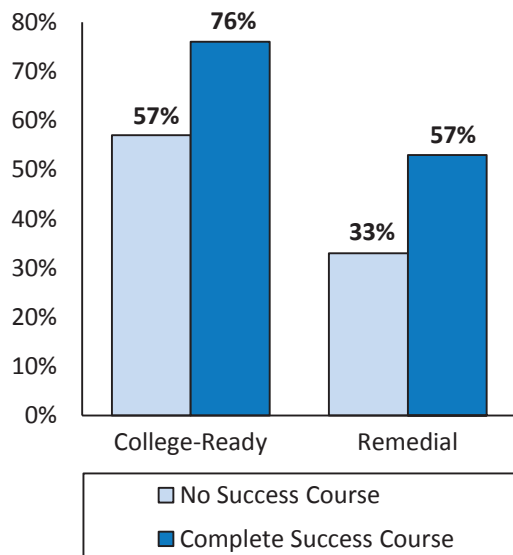
Course Components
➢ Study Skill Development
➢ Career Exploration
➢ Academic Planning
➢ Employment Skills
➢ Financial Literacy
➢ Stress Management
➢ Practical Leadership Skills
➢ Balancing Responsibilities

1 Earned an award, transferred to the state university system, or still enrolled after 5-years

Source: Florida Department of Education, "Taking Student Life Skills Course Increases Academic Success," November 2006, http://www.fldoe.org/cc/OSAS/DataTrendsResearch/PDF/DT31.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

While intuitively the need for these courses makes sense, until recently there was little quantitative data to demonstrate their effectiveness. In 2006, the Florida Department of Education released a report on the efficacy of the state's success course. The study found that both college-ready and remedial students who completed the course were significantly more likely to earn a degree or transfer to the state university system. Since then, several studies have produced comparable data.

Given the positive outcomes of student success courses, college leaders are asking: "Should we make success courses mandatory?" Prior to expanding course offerings or requirements, the Education Advisory Board encourages institutions to calculate the projected cost of expanding the success course to new student populations. Research reveals that the cost of success courses varies widely across institutions.

Make it Mandatory?

First Assess Current Program Cost and Retention Gain

Cost Return Calculator
Jobs for the Future and The Delta Cost Project

Category	2010-2011 (Sample Data)
Total program expenses per FTE student	$2,889
Additional number of students retained through program	22
Total net tuition and state/local appropriations revenue from additional students retained	$239,278
Percentage of program expenses recouped by "additional" students retained	78%

Calculated with comparison group retention data

Varies widely across institutions, from $50 - $3000

Primary, though not only, indicator of ROI

Calculator Worksheets Available at:

http://www.collegeproductivity.org/page/projects/other-projects/calculating-cost-return

Source: Delta Cost Project, "Calculating Cost Return for Investment sin Student Success," December 2009, http://www.deltacostproject.org/resources/pdf/ISS_cost_return_report.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Jobs for the Future and The Delta Cost Project have created a series of worksheets to help institutions calculate the cost and return of their student success course. The URL for the tool is available on this page should you wish to access the worksheets.

Practice #10: Learning Assessment Portal

As one way to lower the cost of teaching college success skills, a handful of colleges are moving instruction online by developing learning assessment portals. As part of, or in lieu of, a success course, student participants complete a survey that analyzes how they process information. The portal then generates an overview of student learning style, as well as customized academic and career recommendations.

Low-Cost Complement to Success Course

Online Learning Assessment Portal Generates Customized Advice

Self-Assessment → **Learning Style Analysis** → **Customized Study Tips**

When you aren't sure how to spell a word, which of the following are you most likely to do?

A.   Write it out to see if it looks right
B.   Sound it out
C.   Write it out to see if it feels right

Auditory

Kinesthetic

Visual

Visual Learner
Ideas and information are associated with images

✓ Draw concept maps, idea charts or other illustrations when studying for an exam

✓ When choosing your seat in class, avoid sitting near visual distractions

Student completes a computer-based survey on personal learning style

Survey response generates a customized overview of student learning style visible to student and course instructor

Portal provides tailored study tips and academic advice based on student learning preferences

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Learning assessment portals vary in design and application across institutions. However, administrators agree that student learning assessment results should be available to college faculty and staff; access to student learning preferences and academic interests can facilitate productive advising conversations. To protect student information, most institutions offer separate portal views for staff members and students.

Central Piedmont Community College launched a locally designed learning assessment portal in 2004 and paired it with the institution's success course. Data shows that portal participants are more likely to pass their courses, more likely to be retained, and more likely to earn a degree. The institution recently received a Next Generation Learning Challenge grant to implement the portal at seven peer institutions.

Portal Boosts Performance and Completion
Central Piedmont Community College

CPCC Portal Features

Launched learning assessment website for-at risk students in 2004 paired with student success course

Assessments can be accessed by counselors and instructors

Portal contains an early alert function to signal student academic trouble in a specific class

Received Next Generation Learning Challenge award to implement portal at seven peer institutions

Improved outcomes for web portal participants:

↑ **11%** *Higher Course Passage Rate*

↑ **9%** *Term-to-Term Retention*

↑ **3 %** *More Likely to Earn Degree*

High Marks from Students

"I have not been to school in a long time so it's really helpful to be told, 'This is what you need to do to succeed here.' Now I'm ready."

Timothy Graham
CPCC Portal Student

Source: Josh Fischman, "7 Community Colleges Open an Online Doorway to Better Grades and Graduation Rates," Chronicle of Higher Education, Nov 6. 2011, http://chronicle.com/article/7-Community-Colleges-Try-an/129605/; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The majority of community college entrants are not prepared for college-level academic competencies. A startling 55% of entering students require at least one development course, yet only a small fraction of these remedial students go on to complete a degree within three years. Strong American Schools estimates that this remediation costs the United States over $2 billion each year.

The Triple Cost of Failed Remediation

Majority of Entrants Require But Do Not Complete Developmental Education

Students Seeking Associates that Require Remediation
Only 15% of Remedial Students Complete Degree in 3 Years

45% Do Not Require

55% Require

85% Do Not Complete Degree
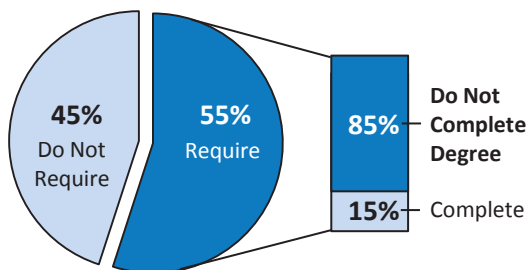
15% Complete

Multiple Parties Bear High Cost

1 **Individual**
Lost Time and Tuition

2 **Taxpayer**
Failed Public Education

3 **Economy**
Absence of Worker

$2.3 B
Annual Cost of Remediation[2]

2 Strong American Schools

Source: Complete College America, "Time is the Enemy,"
http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time_Is_the_Enemy.pdf, accessed 6 Nov. 2011; Bruce Vandal,
"Rebuilding the Remedial Education Bridge to College Success," Getting Past Go, May 2010,
http://www.gettingpastgo.org/docs/GPGpaper.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The suboptimal state of remedial education raises the question "whose role should it be?" Given budget constraints and the ever-expanding mandate of community colleges, some leaders question whether two-year institutions are the right place for developmental education reform.

But Whose Role?

Suboptimal Status Quo Unsustainable

The Usual Suspects

Community College

High School

University

Searching for a New Home

"Developmental education will be one of the biggest issues in higher education over the next ten years. It should be happening in high school but it's not, and we [community colleges] aren't doing it well. Should it live in a new public entity— something in-between college and high-school? Or should we not be doing it at all?"

Community College Trustee

"Radical" Candidates

Workplace

?

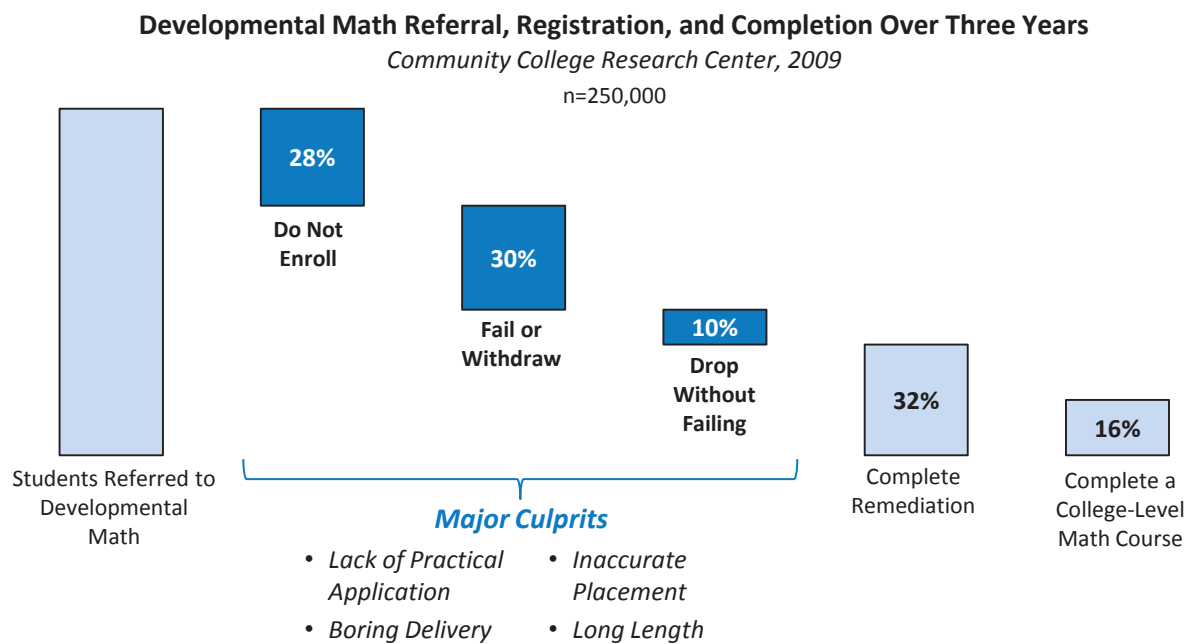*New Public Entity*

No One

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The Education Advisory Board anticipates that developmental education will undergo a major transformation across the next decade; the costs of failed remediation are unsustainable. As one means of controlling costs, states are proposing limits on the number of remedial courses that can be attempted by developmental students.

To begin fixing developmental education, it's critical to understand why so few students who are referred to developmental coursework actually earn a credential—at what point do students discontinue their education?

Fixing the Leaky Pipeline
A Need for New Strategies at Every Step

Developmental Math Referral, Registration, and Completion Over Three Years
Community College Research Center, 2009
n=250,000

- Students Referred to Developmental Math
- **28%** Do Not Enroll
- **30%** Fail or Withdraw
- **10%** Drop Without Failing
- **32%** Complete Remediation
- **16%** Complete a College-Level Math Course

Major Culprits

- *Lack of Practical Application*
- *Boring Delivery*
- *Inaccurate Placement*
- *Long Length*

Source: Thomas Bailey, Dong Wook Jeong, and Sung-Woo Cho; "Referral, Enrollment, and Completion in Developmental Education Sequences in Community Colleges," New York: Community College Research Center, Nov. 2009, http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?uid=659; Complete College America, "Time is the Enemy," http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time_Is_the_Enemy.pdf, accessed 6 Nov. 2011; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

A study from the Community College Research Center on student progression through developmental math depicts a leaky pipeline. Of students referred to remedial math, 28% elect not to enroll, 30% fail or withdraw, and 10% drop without failing. The vast majority of students referred to developmental math drop out before completing remediation.

Research reveals four major factors that lead students to discontinue their education along the remedial sequence: lack of practical or professional application, boring lecture-drill delivery, inaccurate placement, and the long length of developmental sequences. For a growing population of students, remedial requirements take over two years to complete, at which point students may have exhausted their financial aid.

While there are several approaches to developmental education reform, the Education Advisory Board views accelerated developmental education as the closest thing to a silver bullet—smart accelerated models target the major culprits that cause students to give up on remediation.

The Closest Thing to a Silver Bullet

Shortening the Pipeline Through Acceleration: Four Winning Models

Curriculum Compression

Consolidation of multiple developmental education courses through reduction of duplicative content and extended class periods

Mainstreaming Companion Course

Placement of upper-level development students directly into college-level course alongside mandated supplemental instruction

Defining Our Term
Acceleration

Redesign of course content and delivery to expedite completion of educational requirements

Self-Paced Emporium

Conversion of traditional course into self-paced, interactive modules completed in an instructor-staffed computer lab

Basic Skills Integration

Embedded basic skills training in college-level career technical instruction in lieu of pure remedial instruction

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

For the purposes of this publication, acceleration is defined as the redesign of course content and delivery to expedite completion of educational requirements. Research surfaced four types of successful accelerated models: curriculum compression, mainstreaming with a companion course, self-paced emporiums, and basic skills integration.

Practice #11: Mainstreaming Companion Course

Baltimore County Community College has successfully implemented the mainstreaming model. In this accelerated model, upper-level development English students are placed directly into college-level English, bypassing a semester of developmental English. This cohort is required to take a companion success course to cement the teachings of the college-level course.

Mainstreaming Upper-Level Developmental English
Early Results from Baltimore County Community College

CCBC
The Community College
of Baltimore County

Traditional Model	Accelerated Model
ENG 052 → ENG 101	ENG 101 + ALP
Students placed into upper-level developmental writing take remedial writing first semester and English 101 second semester	Students placed into upper-level developmental writing take English 101 first semester with a companion success course
$3,122	**$2,680**
Cost per successful student	Cost per successful student
38%	**74%**
Complete English 101 within 1 year	Complete English 101 within 1 year

Source: David Jenkins, et al., "A Model for Accelerating Academic Success of Community College Remedial English Students: Is the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Effective and Affordable?", Community College Research Center, Sep. 2010, http://www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/2010/documents/CCRC%20Evaluation%20of%20ALP%20Baltimore.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

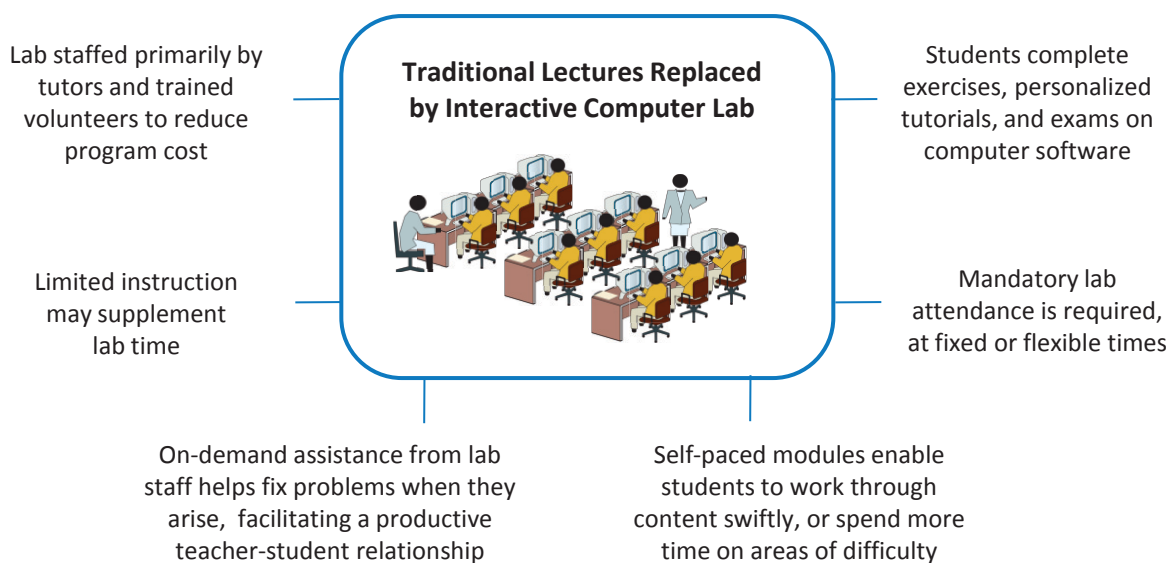Results data shows that 74% of accelerated students complete the first semester of college-level English by the end of their first year, compared with 38% of students in the traditional developmental English program. Through the Scaling Innovation project, staff members at Baltimore County Community College are supporting other institutions that are implementing the accelerated mainstreaming model.

Practice #12: Math Emporium

First made popular by Virginia Tech, the self-paced emporium model is now being adopted by community colleges across the country. The defining feature of the emporium is that traditional classroom lecture is replaced by an interactive computer lab. Students complete exercises, personalized tutorials, and exams—all on computer software. Instructors play an important yet unique role, offering students personalized assistance during lab time.

Technology Transforms Developmental Instruction
Emporium Model Accelerates and Enhances Learning

Lab staffed primarily by tutors and trained volunteers to reduce program cost

Students complete exercises, personalized tutorials, and exams on computer software

Traditional Lectures Replaced by Interactive Computer Lab

Limited instruction may supplement lab time

Mandatory lab attendance is required, at fixed or flexible times

On-demand assistance from lab staff helps fix problems when they arise, facilitating a productive teacher-student relationship

Self-paced modules enable students to work through content swiftly, or spend more time on areas of difficulty

Source: The National Center for Academic Transformation, "The Emporium Model," accessed Dec. 10, 2011, http://www.thencat.org/R2R/AcadPrac/CM/MathEmp; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Among community colleges, the emporium model is most commonly used to teach pre-college competencies. In recent years, colleges using emporium-style learning have modularized the entire developmental curriculum, enabling students to work through content at their own pace. Students can spend more time on areas of difficulty, or move swiftly through material that comes naturally. Developmental instructors report that some students complete two—or even three—traditional sequences over the course of one semester in the self-paced emporium.

Cleveland State Community College and Jackson State Community College recently implemented the math emporium model. Although the model looks slightly different at each institution, both have impressive results: the math emporium led to a double-digit increase in developmental math completion rates. Further, reliance on computer software for instruction and grading has substantially lowered the cost of delivery.

Real Outcomes of Developmental Math Emporium
Colleges Reap Cost Savings and Completion Gains

	Cleveland State COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Jackson State COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Weekly Format	1 hour of small computer lab instruction and 2 hours of large, unscheduled computer lab time	3 hours of fixed lab time in large lab staffed by tutors and instructors
Cost Savings	19 percent less than traditional delivery	20 percent less than traditional delivery
Results	32 percent increase in students completing developmental math; 42 percent increase in college-level math enrollment; 7 percent increase in overall retention	24 percent increase in students completing developmental math; reduced student tuition for developmental sequence
Lessons Learned	• Create weekly modules • Increase instructor's student load	• Transform sequence into self-paced modules • Utilize tutors to lower costs

Majority of math emporium colleges moving to fixed lab time

Self-paced, content mastery modules deliver best results

Source: The National Center for Academic Transformation, "The Emporium Model," accessed Dec. 10, 2011, http://www.thencat.org/R2R/AcadPrac/CM/MathEmp; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The Education Advisory Board views the self-paced emporium model as a game changer in the developmental education space. The math emporium at Cleveland State Community College led to a 32% increase in students completing developmental math and a 42% increase in the number of students enrolling in college-level math. These gains were accomplished with a 19% cost savings. Rarely does a completion strategy offer the potential for such high returns.

Practice #13: Basic Skills Integration

One of the major culprits in student attrition during the remediation sequence is the apparent disconnect between remedial work and students' professional goals. A growing number of institutions are combating this problem by contextualizing remediation, or integrating basic skills training with professional, college-level training.

Colleges Ascend Ladder to Integrated Basic Education
Contextualizing Remedial Coursework Improves Completion

Ease of Implementation (vertical axis)

Non-Integrated

CPE/ABE Instruction:
Separate; ABE as Support

ABE Curriculum:
Generic

Contextualized

CPE/ABE Instruction:
Separate; ABE as Support

ABE Curriculum:
Discipline-Specific

Partially Integrated

CPE/ABE Instruction:
Co-Taught; ABE as Support

ABE Curriculum:
Discipline-Specific

Fully Integrated

CPE/ABE Instruction:
Co-Taught

ABE Curriculum:
Interwoven with CPE Curriculum

Long-Term Impact on Credential Attainment (horizontal axis)

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Most community colleges offer non-integrated remedial coursework. Students with unique career goals and academic plans are taught the same basic math, reading, and writing skills. However, some colleges are embedding basic skills training into specialized professional training through contextualized, partially integrated, or fully integrated instruction.

Fully integrated instruction requires effort to reach, but offers the potential for significant gains in student credential completion. This model does not separate basic skills and professional instruction, but rather views them as one. Basic skills training is interwoven into the curriculum, typically into a certificate program.

The state of Washington has developed a program of fully integrated adult basic and workforce education called Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) that's now being used at all 34 of the state's community colleges. The I-BEST for-credit credential sequences feed students to high-demand, high-pay industries such as manufacturing and health care.

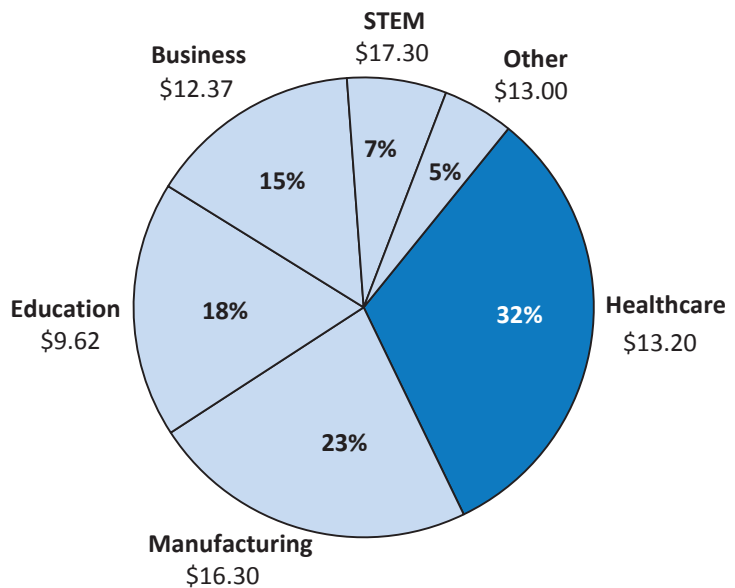# Embedding Adult Basic Education into Workforce Training
Washington's I-Best

Basic Skills and Technical Instructors Co-Teach Credential Sequence

Basic Skills Instructor

Technical Instructor

Minimum 50% Instruction Overlap
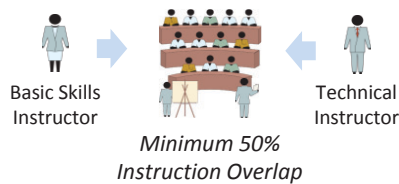
- Launched in 2006, I-BEST programs are now offered at all of Washington's 34 community colleges

- For-credit programs in high-demand, high-pay industries

- State funds program participants at 1.25 FTE

Fields Target High Demand Industries
Median Hourly Wages for I-BEST Completers

Business $12.37 — 15%
STEM $17.30 — 7%
Other $13.00 — 5%
Healthcare $13.20 — 32%
Manufacturing $16.30 — 23%
Education $9.62 — 18%

Source: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, accessed 25 Dec. 2011, http://sbctc.edu/college/abepds/ibest_factsheet_10.09_001.pdf; John Wachen, Davis Jenkins, and Michelle Van Noy, "How I-BEST Works: Findings from a Field Study of Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Program," http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=806; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

To ensure that I-BEST coursework is fully integrated, basic skills and technical instructors must co-teach for at least 50% of classroom instruction time.

Adopting I-BEST requires institutions to overcome implementation barriers; developing a new academic structure of remedial education is costly, and the model calls for coordination among multiple departments. However, institutions offering I-BEST programs have learned from these early challenges and are accelerating remediation and credential attainment for a previously underserved population.

Evaluating an Evolving Innovation

I-BEST Outcomes Improving with Every Iteration

Implementation Challenges	Lessons Learned
Expensive to develop new structure and costly for the state and college to sustain	Pilot program in department that demonstrates a strong interest
Coordination between basic skills and technical departments requires strong buy-in and commitment from faculty and staff	Facilitate productive relationships among basic skill and technical co-instructors through how-to manual and workshops
High-cost of program (college-level tuition) relative to traditional basic skills course stretches student budgets	Coordinate with financial aid office to highlight funding options for participants

Comparative Outcomes for I-Best Participants

Academic performance   *Persistence to Second Year*   *Attainment Likelihood*

Source: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, accessed 25 Dec. 2011, http://sbctc.edu/college/abepds/ibest_factsheet_10.09_001.pdf; John Wachen, Davis Jenkins, and Michelle Van Noy, "How I-BEST Works: Findings from a Field Study of Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Program," http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=806; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

IV.   Developing Alternative Career Pathways

❧ *Shorten Track to Employment*

   Practice #14: Accelerated Occupational Education

   Practice #15: One-Year Associate

   Practice #16: Stackable Certificates

❧ *Connect Educational Pipeline*

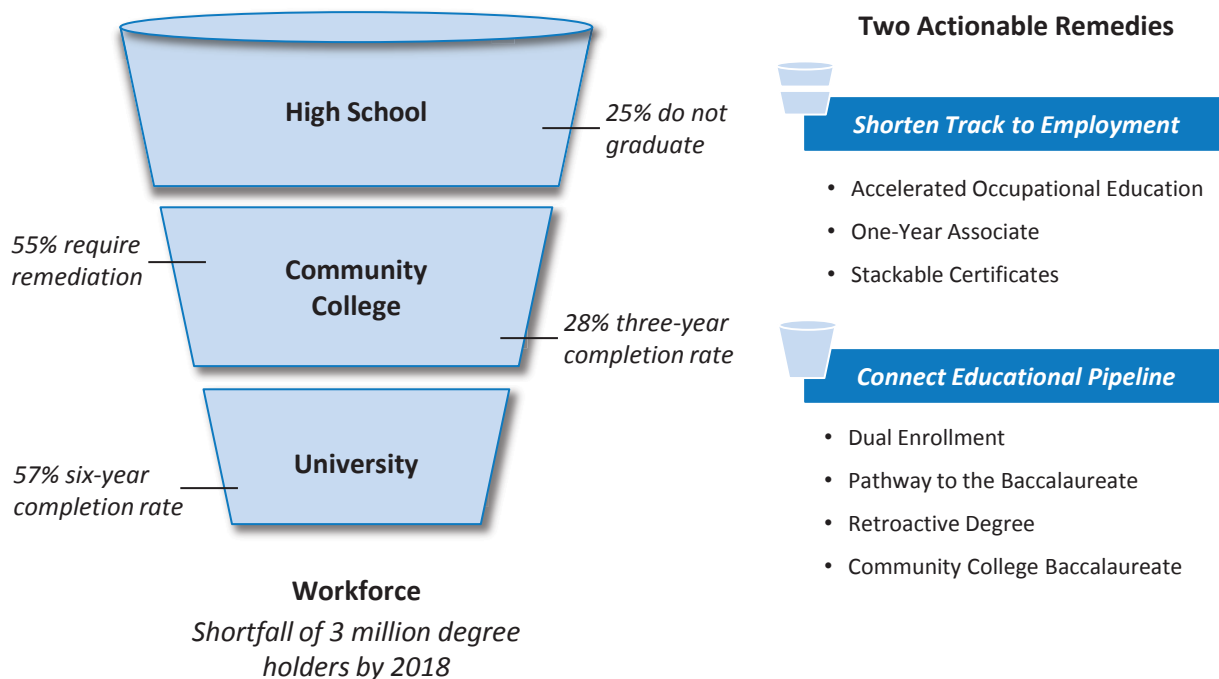   Practice #17: High School Dual Enrollment

   Practice #18: Pathway Transition Services

   Practice #19: Retroactive Associate Degree

   Practice #20: Community College Baccalaureate

The traditional pathway from high school to community college to university to the workforce is long and often disconnected. These factors cause many students to drop out along the way, leaving our country with a projected shortfall of skilled workers and a mismatch between training and high-demand professions.

Traditional Pathway Not Sufficient

High School — 25% do not graduate

55% require remediation — **Community College**

28% three-year completion rate

57% six-year completion rate — **University**

Workforce
Shortfall of 3 million degree holders by 2018

Two Actionable Remedies

Shorten Track to Employment

• Accelerated Occupational Education
• One-Year Associate
• Stackable Certificates

Connect Educational Pipeline

• Dual Enrollment
• Pathway to the Baccalaureate
• Retroactive Degree
• Community College Baccalaureate

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

One of the greatest barriers to improving the educational pathway is the existence of multiple actors and multiple tiers of ownership. The dropout problem does not reside in the community college space—it's systemic. Despite this barrier, college leaders are equipped with two broad actionable remedies that positively impact student credential completion. First, community colleges can shorten the pipeline by offering accelerated programs and certificates that feed students directly to high-demand, high-pay jobs.

Second, community colleges are uniquely positioned to connect the educational pipeline. Through secondary school programming, colleges are positioned to help students realize their attainment potential starting in high school, through an associate, and beyond.

Short-term credentials are rapidly gaining popularity among college-goers. In the past 10 years, the number of short-term certificates earned at community colleges has almost tripled, with less-than-one-year certificates leading the way.

Short-Term Credentials Gaining Popularity

Closing Attainment Gap For Minority Populations

Number of Certificates Earned at Community Colleges

NCES Annual Attainment Data, 1990-2010
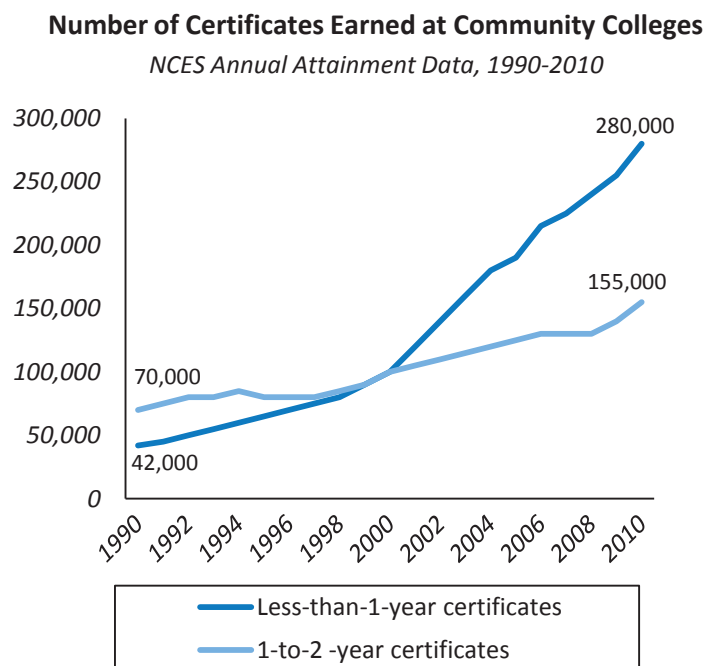
Increase in Certificate Attainment by Ethnicity, 1990-2010

▲ 440% *Caucasian students*

▲ 776% *African-American students*

▲ 1,338% *Hispanic students*

▲ 947% *Asian/Pacific Islander students*

Source: Christopher Mullen, The Road Ahead: A Look at Trends in the Educational Attainment of Community College Students, American Association of Community Colleges, October 2011, http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Briefs/Documents/PB_RoadAhead.pdf; U.S. Department of Education, "Digest of Education Statistics 2010," National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d10/ch_3.asp, accessed Sep. 19, 2011; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

As certificate attainment has increased, the attainment gap across minority populations has decreased. From 1990 through 2010, there was a 440% increase in Caucasian students earning certificates, a 776% increase in attainment for African-American students, and an impressive 1,338% increase for Hispanic students.

However, earnings and employability of certificate-holders varies substantially by field. Successful short-term certificate programs are aligned with local workforce needs. When designing short-term occupational programs, college leaders must consider the employability of graduates—certificate completion cannot be the sole indicator of success.

Practice #14: Accelerated Occupational Education

Tennessee's Technology Centers excel at providing high-quality accelerated occupational education. 75% of enrolled students earn a credential and 83% of graduates are employed in their field of training. Administrators credit these impressive outcomes to two key elements: high-demand occupational programs aligned with local needs; and intensive, structured program offerings.

Tennessee Tech Centers Produce Workforce-Ready Grads

Success Credited to Industry Alignment and Intensive Block Scheduling
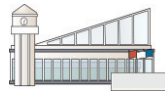
27 Technology Centers Across Tennessee

High-Skill, High-Demand Occupations	Structured Short-Term Programs
• Automotive Mechanics • Business Systems Technology • Computer Operations • Electro-Mechanical Technology • Nursing Assistant • Surgical Technology	• One-and two-year certificate and diploma programs awarded by instructional hours • Classes M-F, 6-hour block schedule • Year-round calendar • Cohort model for entire sequence • Online and evening offerings (4pm-9pm)

75%
Credential Completion Rate, 2009

83%
Employed in Field of Training, 2009

Source: Tennessee Technology Center at Nashville, accessed Jan. 2, 2012;,http://www.ttcnashville.edu/;
Tennessee Board of Regents, "Tennessee Technology Centers," accessed Jan.2, 2012,
http://www.tbr.edu/offices/tennesseetechnologycenters.aspx?id=322; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Practice #15: One-Year Associate

Borrowing from the successful structural elements of the Tennessee Technology Centers, Miami Dade College and Ivy Tech Community College began offering one-year associate degrees in 2010. The pilot programs target high-demand fields and utilize the cohort model alongside intensive block scheduling.

Colleges Pilot One-Year Associate
Accelerated Option for College-Ready Students

	IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE	**Miami Dade College**	
Pilot	August 2010	August 2010	
Weekly Schedule	8am-5pm Cohort, M-F	8am-1pm Cohort, M-F	*Cohort block scheduling keeps students engaged*
Target Population	College-Ready	College-Ready	
Degree Programs	Health Care Support; General Studies; Computer Information Science	Computer Information Technology; Business Administration	*High-demand programs attract participants*
Format	Face-to-face instruction; Friday field trips; Summer refresher course	12-month blended online and face-to-face sessions	

Source: Miami Dade College, "Miami Dade College to Offer Accelerated Associate Degree Programs," Aug. 11, 2010, http://www.mdc.edu/main/news/articles/2010/08/mdcto_offer_accelerated_associate_degree.asp; Andrea Fuller, Apr. 25, 2010, "Experiment at Ivy Tech: a One-Year Associate," http://chronicle.com/article/Experiment-at-Ivy-Tech-a/65221/; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Because the one-year associate programs were recently established, the data has yet to reveal any definite conclusion about the programs' effectiveness. Data from the 2010 to 2011 pilots and matched-comparison groups show that accelerated students were much more likely to graduate. However, the pilot programs carefully targeted traditional, college-ready students.
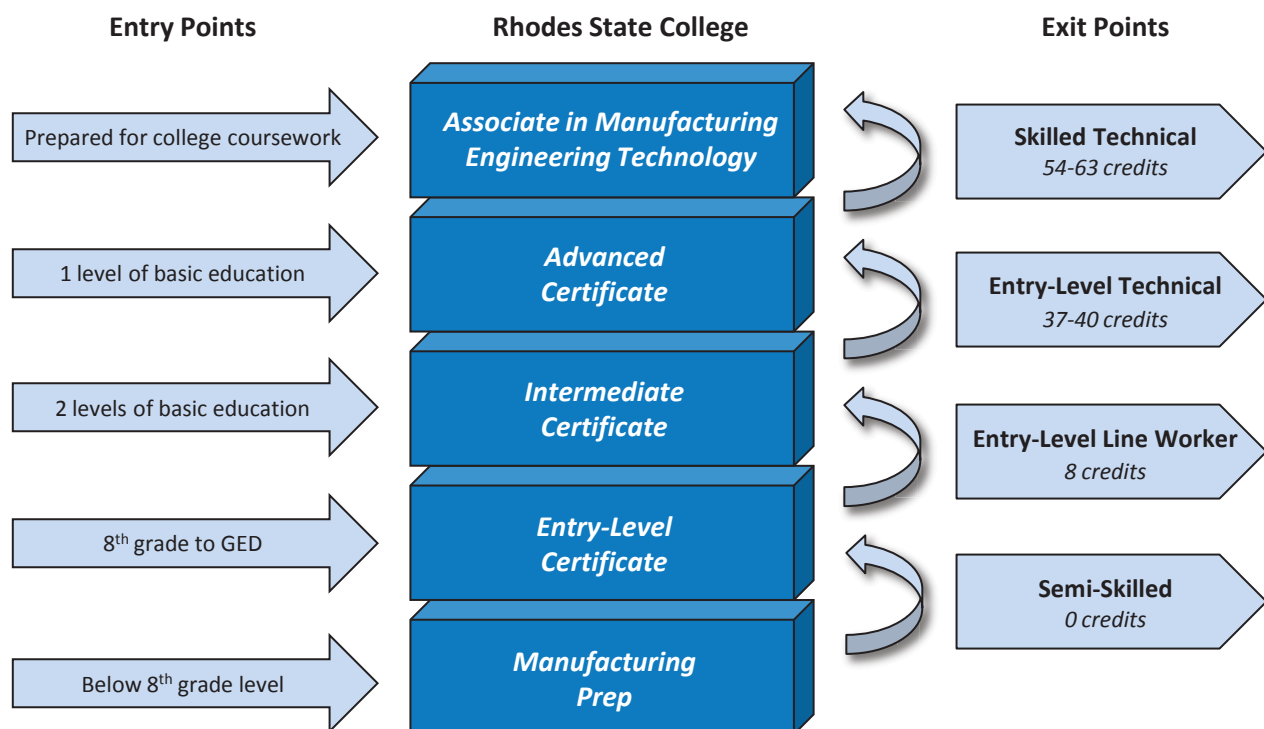
Just as four-year institutions are exploring three-year baccalaureate programs, the Education Advisory Board anticipates that more community colleges will develop one-year associates. Current research suggests that one-year associate programs are well-suited for college-ready students but are not designed to meet the needs of remedial learners.

Practice #16: Stackable Certificates

While the accelerated associate programs at Ivy Tech and Miami Dade show promise for college-ready students, one-year programs are not well suited for students in need of remediation or for students committed to working full-time while earning a degree. For these students, colleges are developing stackable certificates—a progression of for-credit technical certificates with multiple entry and exit points.

Stackable Certificates Allow Entry and Exit

Accelerated Option for Working Students in Need of Remediation

Entry Points	Rhodes State College	Exit Points
Prepared for college coursework	**Associate in Manufacturing Engineering Technology**	**Skilled Technical** *54-63 credits*
1 level of basic education	**Advanced Certificate**	**Entry-Level Technical** *37-40 credits*
2 levels of basic education	**Intermediate Certificate**	**Entry-Level Line Worker** *8 credits*
8th grade to GED	**Entry-Level Certificate**	**Semi-Skilled** *0 credits*
Below 8th grade level	**Manufacturing Prep**	

Source: Community Research Partners, "Ohio Stackable Certificates: Models for Success," Feb. 2008; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The state of Ohio is committed to stackable certificate development. The diagram above depicts the entry and exit points for the manufacturing engineering technology program at Rhodes State College, a two-year college in Ohio. Like Washington's I-BEST, Ohio's stackable certificate programs embed remediation into technical training, eliminating the need for years of pre-college basic skills training.

In the stackable certificate model, students can work toward an associate degree while earning professional credentials along the way—entry-level, intermediate, and advanced. These credentials enable students to enter and exit the workforce at increasingly higher levels throughout their education.

In addition to shortening the pipeline to completion, college leaders can limit student attrition by connecting transition points in the educational pipeline.

Connecting Pathways, Elevating Aspirations

"Students are more successful when they are able to see their destination clearly and move toward that destination along a well-marked path. Policies that make higher educational attainment tangible (e.g., articulation agreements, dual-enrollment policies) can remove completion barriers and even elevate the aspirations of students by presenting destinations that are within reach, but not previously known or considered."

Debbie Sydow, President
Onondaga Community College

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Practice #17: High School Dual Enrollment

Most states offer dual enrollment programs in which high school students have an opportunity to enroll in college courses. However, the eligibility requirements and funding for these programs varies from state to state. Florida has a generous dual enrollment program that enables high school students who meet basic eligibility criteria to enroll in certain college courses free of charge.

Giving High School Students an Early Start at College

Dual Enrollment Programs Show Promise, Room for Improvement

Statewide Articulation Manual

"Student eligibility criteria for participation in dual enrollment include passage of the Common Placement Test (CPT) as well as achievement of a 3.0 grade point average for college credit courses and a 2.0 grade point average for career and technical certificate courses."

"Students who meet the eligibility requirements are exempt from the payment of registration, tuition, and laboratory fees. Instructional materials for dual enrollment courses shall also be available to Florida public high school students free of charge."

Florida Department of EDUCATION

1. **Higher Attainment**
   - 4% percent more likely to earn a diploma

2. **Higher Enrollment**
   - 8% percent more likely to enter college

3. **Higher Grades**
   - Average .24 higher GPA one year after high school graduation

4. **Less Diversity**
   - Students more likely to be Caucasian and female, less likely to be African-American or Hispanic

Source: Florida Department of Education, "Statewide Articulation Manual," http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/pdf/statewide-postsecondary-articulation-manual.pdf, accessed Nov. 9 2011; Melinda Karp, et al., "Dual Enrollment Students in Florida and New York City: Postsecondary Outcomes," Community College Research Center, Feb. 2008, http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=578; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Florida's program exposes students to college-level coursework and expectations, connecting the pathway from high school to college. Data show that this connection works: students who enroll in community college courses while in high school are more likely to enter college than those who do not and are more likely to do well in college courses. However, dual-enrolling students tend to be a select group—they are more likely to be Caucasian and female and less likely to be African American and Hispanic.
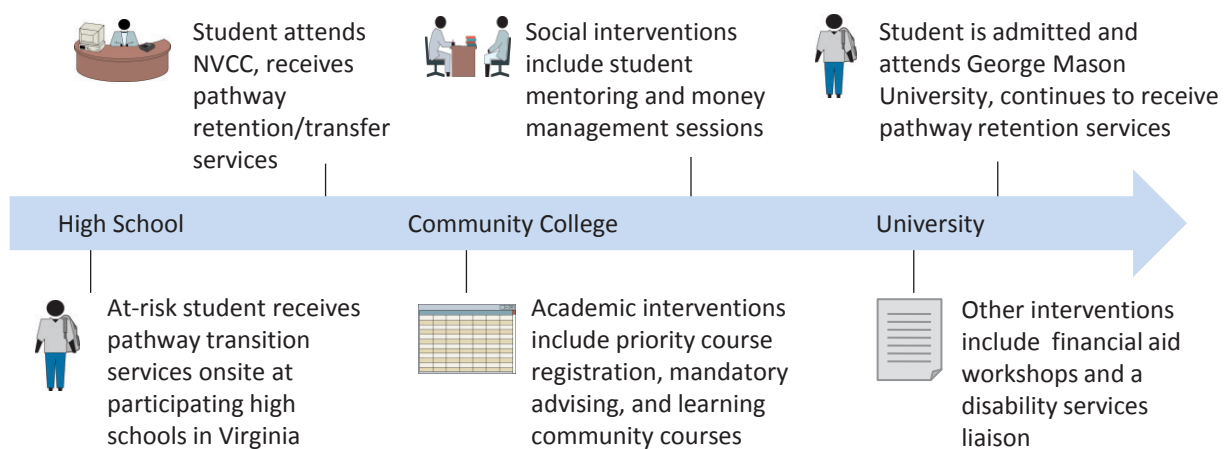
Dual enrollment benefits students from diverse backgrounds, but research shows that these programs have an especially strong impact on first-generation college-goers. Unfortunately, these students are some of the least likely to take advantage of dual enrollment opportunities.

Practice #18: Pathway Transition Services

Northern Virginia Community College has reached at-risk high school students through the Pathway to the Baccalaureate program, a support network that follows students from high school to baccalaureate completion.

Intensive Support from High School to BA

Pathway to the Baccalaureate at Northern Virginia Community College

Student attends NVCC, receives pathway retention/transfer services

Social interventions include student mentoring and money management sessions

Student is admitted and attends George Mason University, continues to receive pathway retention services

High School — Community College — University

At-risk student receives pathway transition services onsite at participating high schools in Virginia

Academic interventions include priority course registration, mandatory advising, and learning community courses

Other interventions include financial aid workshops and a disability services liaison

Key Success Metrics	Pathway Participants	National Average
Earned college credit in the first year	98%	70%
In good academic standing after first semester	70%	47%

Source: Todd Bennett and Ellen Fancher-Ruiz, "The Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program," Northern Virginia Community College, accessed Oct. 22, 2011; http://www.educationalpolicy.org/events/R08/pdf/Bennett.pdf; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

The program begins by connecting with at-risk students while they are still in high school. In coordination with Northern Virginia Community College's support offices, trained counselors visit area high schools to assist students with academic planning, placement testing, and financial aid. These counselors facilitate the transition from high school to community college.

The support network continues throughout students' tenure at Northern Virginia Community College, with program participants receiving special advising and academic preparation services. This active guidance follows students through associate degree completion, transfer to George Mason University, and baccalaureate degree attainment. The Pathway to the Baccalaureate program directly connects the pipeline from high school to university, and the student outcomes illustrate the success of this type of strategy.
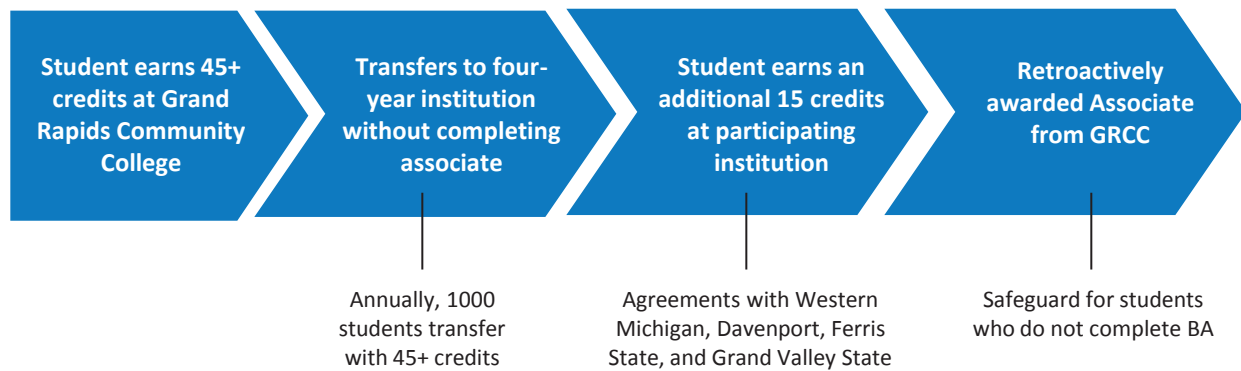
Practice #19: Retroactive Associate Degree

Connecting the pathway from community college to university isn't restricted to conventional transfer agreements. In recent years, several two- and four-year institutions have developed partnerships that retroactively award associate degrees to transfer students. These agreements target students who transfer from a community college to a four-year institution just shy of associate degree attainment.

Awarding Transfers a Retroactive Associate Degree

Michigan Partnerships Provide Extra Credential for Near Graduates

2011 Pilot

Student earns 45+ credits at Grand Rapids Community College	Transfers to four-year institution without completing associate	Student earns an additional 15 credits at participating institution	Retroactively awarded Associate from GRCC
	Annually, 1000 students transfer with 45+ credits	Agreements with Western Michigan, Davenport, Ferris State, and Grand Valley State	Safeguard for students who do not complete BA

Easy Candidates for Credentials

"Awarding retroactive associate degrees for eligible students would yield, at a minimum, a 15 to 16 percent increase in the number of associate degrees awarded. This would be a considerable down-payment on the big goals of degree completion."

Institute for Higher Education Policy

Source: Institute for Higher Education Policy, "Project Win-Win," accessed Jan 3. 2012, http://www.ihep.org/projectwin-win.cfml; Cheryl Roland, "WMU signs on to help GRCC students earn associate degrees," Western Michigan University, June 27. 2011, http://www.wmich.edu/wmu/news/2011/06/058.html; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Grand Rapids Community College in Michigan has entered a partnership with four universities—Western Michigan, Davenport, Ferris State, and Grand Valley State—to retroactively award associate degrees to community college student transfers. To be eligible, transfer students must have earned a minimum of 45 credits at Grand Rapids Community College. After reaching a combined total of 60 credits through university and community college coursework, these students are awarded an associate degree.

The Institute for Higher Education Policy estimates that awarding retroactive degrees would yield a 15% increase in the number of associate degrees awarded annually. Research contacts explain that this strategy isn't simply about bookkeeping—retroactive associate degrees provide students with an additional credential and safeguard.

Practice #20: Community College Baccalaureate

Community college baccalaureate programs connect the pathway by eliminating student transition difficulties from two-year colleges to four-year institutions. Eighteen states now permit community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees in addition to associate and certificate programs.

The Rise of the Community College Baccalaureate
18 States and Counting

No Baccalaureate Community College

Debating Baccalaureate Community Colleges

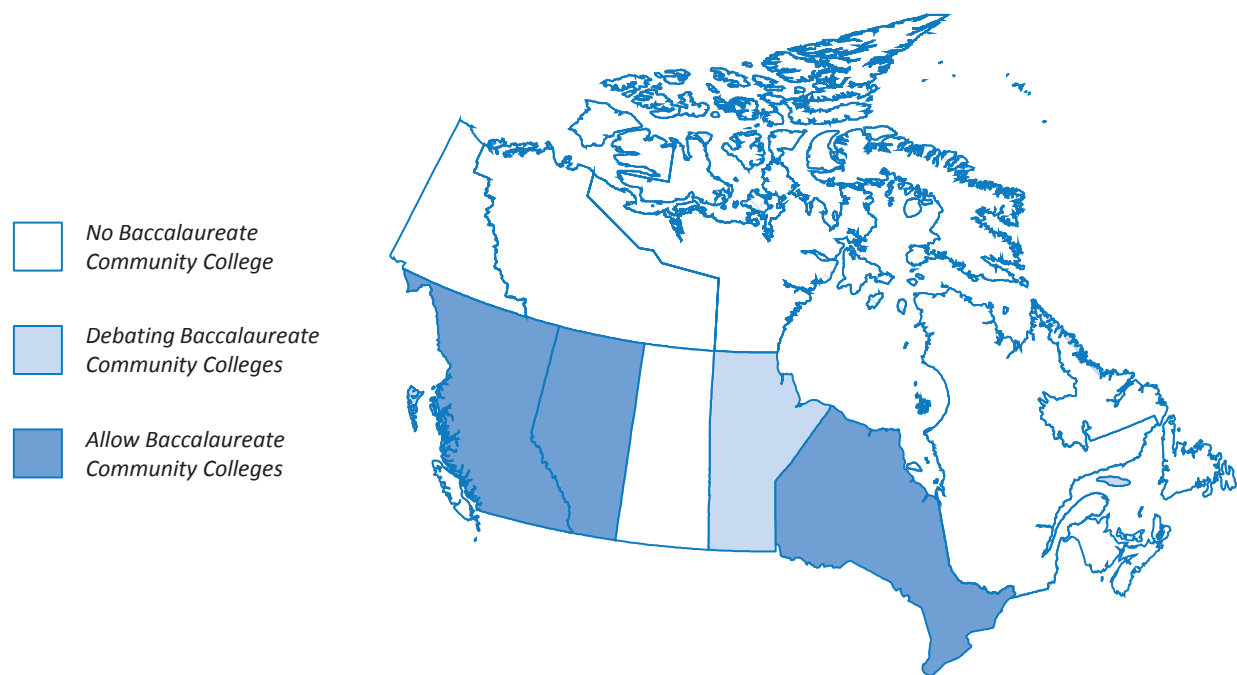Allow Baccalaureate Community Colleges
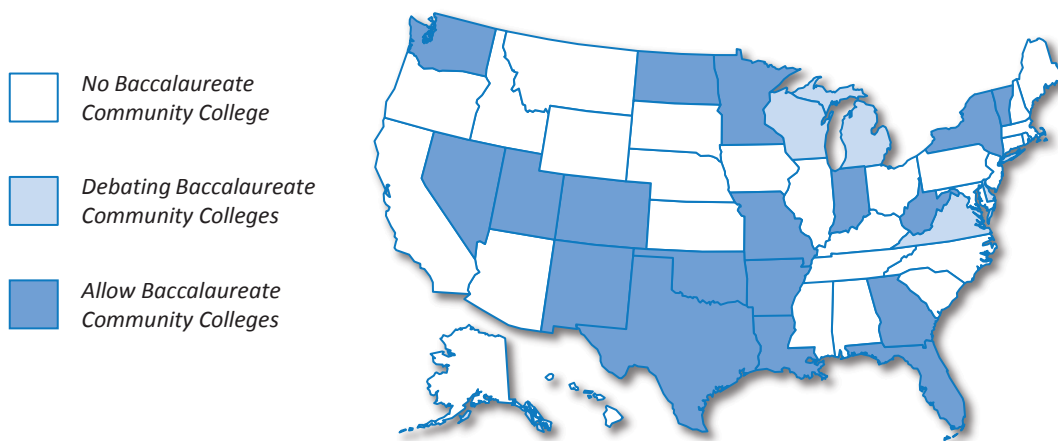
Degrees Conferred

- Bachelor of Science (BS)
- Bachelor of Arts (BA)
- Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS)
- Bachelor of Applied Technology (BAT)
- Bachelor of Technology (BT)
- Bachelor of Engineering (BE)
- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)
- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)

Source: Baccalaureate Community College Association, "Baccalaureate Conferring Locations," accessed 10 Oct. 2011, http://www.accbd.org/resources/baccalaureate-conferring-locations/; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

States strictly limit the type and number of baccalaureate degree programs that can be offered at community colleges. Degree offerings are often restricted to applied programs in high-demand occupations. However, a handful of states have permitted community colleges to offer more traditional BA and BS degrees. In Florida, over half of the state's community colleges offer four-year degrees.

Baccalaureate community colleges are not a phenomenon unique to the United States; currently, three Canadian provinces permit community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees.

Trend Extends Up North

No Baccalaureate
Community College

Debating Baccalaureate
Community Colleges

Allow Baccalaureate
Community Colleges

Source: Baccalaureate Community College Association, "Baccalaureate Conferring Locations," accessed 10 Oct. 2011, http://www.accbd.org/resources/baccalaureate-conferring-locations/; Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

As in the United States, the types of baccalaureate degree programs available through community colleges differ from province to province. In Alberta and Ontario, community college baccalaureate programs are largely restricted to technical and applied offerings. Community colleges develop baccalaureate programs in response to local labor market needs, such as ecotourism or computer science. In British Columbia, community colleges offer more general baccalaureate degrees, programs that could be found at conventional universities in the region—one institution offers a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies.

The community college baccalaureate phenomenon is not without its critics. Community college baccalaureates expand access and facilitate degree completion, but they also raise questions about mission overlap.

Mission Creep?

Net Loss for Public Good

"Community colleges are very good at what they do—offering associates and certificates. But when these institutions start providing baccalaureate degrees, they become mediocre. It's a net loss for the public good."

Provost
Public Research University

Consistent with Mission

"One of the usual questions people ask is, 'Is this mission creep?' It certainly isn't. Our mission is the same. We are serving our community. The baccalaureate degrees offered are in areas that our communities need and aren't currently being offered by local institutions."

Linda Howdyshell, Provost
Broward College

Source: Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

Higher education leaders offer unique visions of the 21st century community college mission. For some, that mission mirrors that of the last century—serving local communities through associate and certificate programs. Others argue that serving today's community requires new thinking: an expanded mandate that includes different types of programs and services.

The rise of the community college baccalaureate is a reflection of the growing importance of community colleges in meeting higher education attainment goals. Across the next decade, the Education Advisory Board anticipates that more colleges will be called upon to offer baccalaureate degrees, as well as other programs that challenge conventional understandings of community college mission.