



Community College of Allegheny County
Achieving the Dream Newsletter
Focusing on Student Success

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The Journey to Success Begins with a Roadmap

Roadmap is an academic map designed to engage students at entrance and teach them how to become active partners in their educational success. July 1st marked the beginning of the second year of the project with the distribution of Roadmaps to new students. Admissions and Advising are providing copies to students in acceptance packets and red folders for the initial advising session. The public kickoff occurred at the all-college conference on August 11th.

Roadmap has the potential to change students' lives by providing the framework for academic and career planning conversations that will help students maintain focus and achieve their goals. By incorporating Roadmap into your day-to-day interactions with students, whether it's in the classroom, the office or in casual conversations, you will be creating conditions that lead to success.

Please watch the commercial and visit the [website](#) for more information on Roadmap.

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Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Results

A total of eight paired-sections of ENG-100 and ENG-101 were offered in spring 2014. Enrollment in the combined sections was 153 students. The breakdown between the ALP cohort (ENG-100 and ENG-101 combined) and traditional ENG-101 students (college-ready) is listed below.

- ALP students = 71
- Traditional ENG-101 students = 82

The results from spring 2014 are consistent with the results from fall 2013, the first semester ALP was offered. Historically, only 38% of ENG-100 students successfully completed ENG-101 in two years. Since implementing ALP, 83-84% of ENG-100 students passed ENG-101 in one semester (see Table 1).

	Fall 2013 (4 sections)		Spring 2014 (8 sections)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
ALP students who passed both sections	32	84%	59	83%
Traditional students who passed ENG-101	26	81%	60	73%

Table 1

Within semester attrition was higher among traditional ENG-101 students than ALP students. Six traditional students (7%) withdrew from the course compared to three ALP students (4%). For the purpose of this analysis, a 'W' grade was considered "not successful."

Additional analyses on success and progression will be conducted in fall 2014:

- ENG-102 success for fall 2013 cohort
- ENG-102 enrollment for spring 2014 cohort

The Gettysburg Engagement

Julia Fennell, Professor, Honors Program Director and Laurie Sprankle, Associate Professor, History

Without the John Dziak Engagement Fund and the Educational Foundation, the Gettysburg Engagement wouldn't have happened. Professor Laurie Sprankle and I are indebted to the fund for providing the opportunity to enrich the Honors African American History course with a trip to Gettysburg over spring break, leaving campus Thursday morning and returning Friday night.

To further enhance the students' understanding of the Civil War and the transformative influence of the Emancipation Proclamation, we spent two days at Gettysburg National Military Park. We visited the Gettysburg Museum, watched a mini re-creation of the battle at the Gettysburg Cyclorama, listened to a student read President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address at the National Cemetery, heard locals tell the post-war ghost stories on the Gettysburg Ghost Tour, and walked the battlefield with Professor Sprankle serving as docent. Prior to our trip, the students chose a narrowed focus of the African American experience and the battle and conducted research based on extensive use of primary and secondary resources. While on the battlefield, students presented their research projects, using the field and

associated locations as a tangible visual aid to deepen understanding and heighten the aesthetic experience.



As we all know, the community college setting creates challenges for faculty in establishing connections with students outside of the classroom. Our typical MWF/TH course schedules do not easily accommodate opportunities to build relationships between faculty and students, especially at a commuter college such as CCAC where most of our students leave campus immediately following their last class. As noted in “A Developmental Typology of Faculty-Student Interaction outside the Classroom,” “Decades of studies on the educational value of faculty-student interaction have led to two straightforward conclusions: (1) interactions between

faculty members and students have positive effects on student outcomes; and (2) such interactions do not occur as regularly as educators might hope” (Cox 49). Providing opportunities for faculty and students to connect outside the classroom helps ensure student success and retention.

In their final reflections, the students conveyed their appreciation for the experience and expressed their gratitude. Reading these letters reinforces the benefit that we expected to realize, not only in the students’ understanding of the course material but also their personal development and connection to history, to each other, and to us as faculty. In his reflection letter, Shawn-Colin Thomas wrote the following:

“You can learn a lot going to class. However, you can learn a lot more by going to, and showing reverence to, a place where history actually happened. Being afforded the honor of going onto this trip to Gettysburg was, for me, a once in a lifetime experience. As a history major, obviously I knew about what had taken place there and the magnitude of said event, but to actually step foot on that battlefield, to climb through Devil’s Den, to stand in the same spot President Lincoln did when giving the Gettysburg Address was an experience I will never be able to have again.”



We certainly hope the students will find their way back to Gettysburg someday, but Shawn-Colin beautifully captures the sentiment of many of the students – awe and wonder at the investment the college made in their education through the Dziak Engagement Fund award. Thank you for providing a vehicle for our students to engage deeply with the subject matter, each other, and us – the Gettysburg Engagement!

Cox, B. E. (2011). A Developmental Typology of Faculty-Student Interaction outside the Classroom. *New Directions For Institutional Research*, (1), 49-66.

CCAC Student Success Coaches Have a Winning Approach

Darla Coleman, Megan Crane, Miles Hines, Laurel Westrom, Student Success Coaches; Roslynn Wilson, Director (Allegheny Campus), Marshall Ellison, Student Success Coach (Boyce Campus), Fatinma Olaleye, Student Success Coach (North Campus) and Michelle Thomas, Student Success Coach (South Campus)

The Student Success Coaches (SSC) at the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) are sometimes referred to as a mentor, guide or just a go to person. Each campus has one or more SSC that support various populations of students on each CCAC campus and center. Their role is to provide support to the students through the monitoring of the students' grades, providing guidance, supporting the students in developing strategies to make them more successful in their classes and encouraging them to develop action steps that will help them reach their academic and career goals.

All the SSC support and monitor their case loads in similar ways with some variations. Four different student populations are assigned to work with the SSC. They are the students taking three developmental courses, two groups of students funded by Pittsburgh Promise and students participating in ACT 101. All SSC monitor their students at the beginning of the term (approximately the first two weeks of the semester), the midterm period and at the end of each semester.

The SSC whose designated population is students who have tested into three developmental classes make their first contact after the student has taken the Compass Placement Test. The SSC will review the student's schedule to make sure they are enrolled in the SDS102 course (Academic & Personal Development). During this initial contact the Student Success Coach will share the support they will provide the student and establish a date and time to meet. The students will be formally monitored by the SSC until they have completed all of their developmental classes. CCAC's Planning and Institutional Research data indicates that after the 2013 fall semester, 58% of the students were in good academic standing and from fall to spring there was a 77% retention rate. The SSC team goes beyond just monitoring their current students; they also follow up with the students after they have completed their developmental sequence. In addition, they also contact students who are not currently registered for classes to encourage their reenrollment.

The Pittsburgh Promise Foundation identifies the students that are eligible for Pittsburgh Promise funding. One SSC is assigned to support the Pittsburgh Promise students. These are students who have met the following criteria established by the Pittsburgh Promise Foundation: they must reside in the City of Pittsburgh; have attended the Pittsburgh Public School at least from ninth through twelfth grade; earned at least a 2.5 GPA and had 90% attendance upon graduation. CCAC has the largest cohort of Pittsburgh Promise funded students in Pennsylvania. Since the fall of 2008, Pittsburgh Promise has enrolled a total of 1,133 Promise funded students. While at CCAC the SSC evaluates the student's eligibility after every two funded semesters. The students are required to complete 24 credits and maintain a 2.0 GPA after every two funded semesters while at CCAC. These students are monitored by their SSC until they have graduated, transferred, been funded for 8 semesters or have timed out after 5 years.

The Pittsburgh Promise Foundation has created a program only available at CCAC. The Promise CCAC Extension Program is available to students who have met the following criteria established by the Pittsburgh Promise Foundation: residence in the City of Pittsburgh; have attended the Pittsburgh Public School at least from ninth through twelfth grade; have 90% attendance and have a GPA of 2.0-2.49. The SSC evaluates the Promise CCAC Extension students after one funded semester. These students have to earn 9 credits and a 2.0 GPA. If successful, they are funded for one more semester with the same

requirements. After two successful semesters they become Promise eligible and are then monitored in the same manner as the Pittsburgh Promise students.

The fourth student population that is supported by SSC is students enrolled in Act 101. This program is funded by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA). Students enrolled in Act 101 have been determined to be educationally and economically disadvantaged. These students must qualify to receive a Pell Grant. They would also be the students who, for example, have been out of high school for five years before attending college, the first in their family to attend college, have earned a GED or have tested into all developmental classes. These students can participate in the Act 101 Program until they receive a Bachelor's degree.

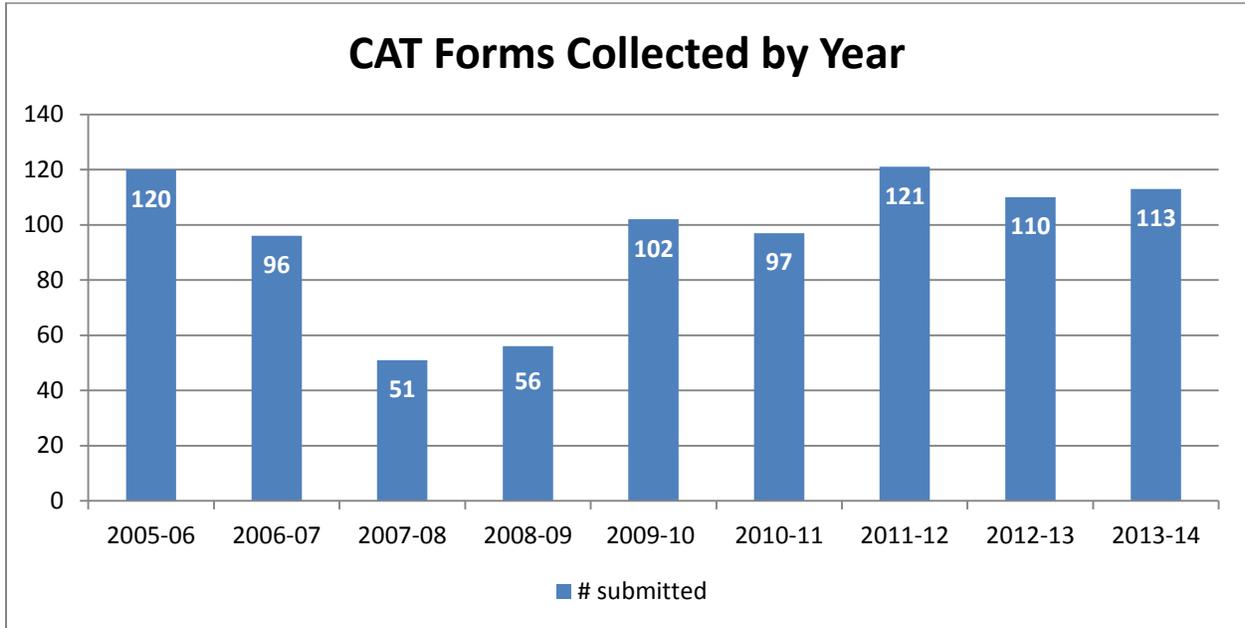
The SSC stress the importance of persistence to their students. Emphasizing semester to semester retention leads to the completion of their academic and career goals. SSC prepare and present various workshops to enhance their students' academic skills outside the classroom. Hopefully, with this information they are better able to identify and utilize the resources on campus necessary to succeed in their courses. Many of these workshops are planned collaboratively with the staff of various Student Development departments on each campus. Some of the topics have been: *How to prepare for an advising session*; *Learning about financial aid probation*; *Resources found in the library* and *How to utilize the online SmartThinking Tutoring*. To entice participation, the Student Life Departments have contributed refreshments and incentives. Outreach Mobile Coaching is another method used by Student Success Coaches to build relationships with their students. SSC visit various campus locations and promote the services of the department. This is often used as a way to begin a conversation with a student that can then be continued in the SSC's office. Some studies have shown that students who participate in Coaching sessions are 10 to 15% more likely to persist toward their degree and have higher graduation rates. The main reason for different contact techniques is to build a trusting bond between the student and SSC so students feel comfortable sharing.

Collaboration with others has occurred on each campus, the following are just a few examples. The South campus SSC, in collaboration with the Perkins and Supportive Services offices, hosted a midterm workshop during the 2014 spring semester to assist students with preparing for exams. Approximately 100 students participated in the workshop. Since 2011 the SSC on the Allegheny Campus have collaborated with Urban Innovation 21 which has afforded students the benefit of having paid internships opportunities. This relationship has provided valuable work experiences for the students. This opportunity has grown from 12 internships to 23 each year. The SSC have aided in this effort by recruiting, interviewing and training the interns. Most recently, the SSC have supported a *Jump Start* initiative developed by one of the SSC at the Allegheny Campus that focused on enrollment. Two sessions were held where students were able to complete their financial aid, view the online orientation, register for classes and learn about the college's services in one morning or afternoon session. Over thirty students attended and twenty students were added to the enrollment of the campus.

The support of the SSC at CCAC has had a positive and substantial effect on students. This partnership helps keep the students connected to the campus resources and promote approaches to balancing the demands of college, work and family. Student Success Coaches are able to listen to the big picture of the students' story and aspirations.

Number of CATs Collected

Each term the Assessment Advisory Group collects CAT summary forms as a measure of participation in assessment. In 2013-14, 113 CATs were submitted. Everyone who submits a CAT will receive a certificate for their portfolios as an easy way to document participation in assessment. Please consider completing a [CAT Summary Sheet](#) for one of your classroom assessments and submit it to aslcommittee@ccac.edu.



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