



Community College of Allegheny County

Achieving the Dream Newsletter

Focusing on Student Success

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Student-Faculty Interaction and Retention

Student-faculty interaction is one of the five benchmark measures of student engagement. CCAC has administered the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) four times, and the score for student-faculty interaction has ranked in the bottom 10% all four times.

Why is student-faculty interaction important?

High levels of student engagement are significantly related to student learning, persistence and academic attainment. Student-faculty interaction is [correlated](#) with measures of retention, specifically the number of term enrolled and the number of credit hours completed. Retention is a key factor in enrollment. Therefore, higher levels of student-faculty interaction will yield an increase in enrollment.

What can be done about it?

Of the six items that comprise the student-faculty interaction benchmark, CCAC is on par with peer group averages for three of them: used email to communicate with instructors, discussed grades or assignments, and received prompt feedback. Further analysis reveals the following challenges:

- Of the 930 students who responded to the CCSSE survey, 357 (39%) of them reported never **talking about career plans with an instructor or advisor**. 70% of these students fall into two categories, full-time traditional aged and part-time non-traditional aged.
- Fifty percent of respondents reported never **discussing ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class**. The majority (71%) of these students fall into the same two categories as above.
- Seventy-seven percent of respondents reported never **working with instructors on activities other than coursework**. Once again, 70% of these students are full-time traditional aged and part-time non-traditional aged.

A good first step would be to ensure that every advisor and instructor takes a few minutes to ask students about their career plans. The [Roadmap to Your Destination](#) is designed to be a framework for academic

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and career planning conversations. If these conversations with instructors occurred outside the classroom and involved an idea from class, the interaction would be considered highly engaging. Simply reducing the number of students who never experienced the types of engagement activities listed above would go a long way toward improving student-faculty interaction and in turn improve the college's enrollment.

The [student engagement toolkit](#) contains tips and resources for promoting student-faculty interaction. For more information about the student-faculty interaction benchmark, contact Mary Kate Quinlan (mquinlan@ccac.edu) to schedule a meeting or workshop.

Accelerated Learning Program Continues to Make a Difference

More developmental students are completing ENG-101 thanks to the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). The paired-course sections provide students the opportunity to apply the skills they develop in ENG-100 to the work they complete in the college-level course. Students take both courses in the same semester with the same instructor who supports the integration of the two courses.

A total of nine paired-sections of ENG-100 and ENG-101 were offered in fall 2014. Enrollment in the combined sections was 166 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 = 79
- Traditional ENG-101 students = 87

The results from fall 2014 are not as good as previous terms. One section of ALP performed poorly with only one of nine students passing both sections thus reducing the overall pass rate to 73% (Table 1) as compared to last year's rates of 83-84% (Table 2). Even though the success rates are not as high as last year, the rates are still significantly higher than the historical average of 38% of ENG-100 students successfully completing ENG-101 within two years.

	Fall 2014 (9 sections)	
	Number	Percentage
ALP students who passed both sections	58	73%
Traditional students who passed ENG-101	69	79%

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 2

Additional analyses will be conducted for previous cohorts to track ENG-102 enrollment and success rates.

Takeaways from AAC&U Annual Conference

AAC&U kicked off their centennial celebration by announcing the LEAP Challenge, a national challenge to prepare all college students to produce “Signature Work.” The LEAP Challenge builds on years of research on what employers say will best prepare students for the global economy. AAC&U also released a [video](#) highlighting the impact of signature work on the students who currently do it.

AAC&U and the Delphi Project collaborated to develop [LEAP for Instructors](#), a set of resources specifically designed for adjunct faculty to support the LEAP Challenge. The [Delphi Project](#) studies the working conditions of non-tenure track faculty and the implications on student learning.

To learn more about the LEAP Challenge, see www.aacu.org/leap/challenge.

CAT Best Practices

The ATD newsletter periodically features a CAT Summary to highlight the best practices in classroom assessment at CCAC. This CAT utilizes self-evaluation, a powerful form of assessment that helps students develop an awareness of their own learning and encourages them to take more responsibility for their learning. The primary purpose for assessment is the improvement of student learning and this CAT exemplifies that principle. (This CAT is also a good example of student-faculty interaction.)

Faculty Name	Sandra Mahon
Campus	Allegheny
Date	November 24, 2014
Discipline/Program	Developmental Studies
Course	DVS103 – Advanced College Reading
What learning outcome are you assessing?	Students will utilize the library website to research a topic
Describe the learning opportunity you provided to students to help them achieve the learning outcome.	The topics were generated after reading NIGHT, by Elie Wiesel. The students were to research a person of interest, and a topic concerning WWII.
Classroom Assessment Technique Used	Post project self-evaluation
What did the assessment data reveal about student	Several students realized that they did not utilize their time and resources well. Upon self-reflection they determined that the

learning?	Learning Commons and my extra out of class research assistance meetings would have helped them realize a better grade.
How did you use the results to improve learning?	Those students who self-identified a desire to re-do their project were given the option of doing so. Although they did not receive full credit, those who wanted a better grade were able to meet with me to work on the project steps.
Evidence of Improved Learning	I had seven students who met with me for individual and small group post -project assistance. We worked on the steps necessary to complete a project according to parameters and the grading rubric. All seven finished with a passing grade on their projects and a more clear understanding of how to utilize the library web site, visit the Learning Commons, and complete a research project.

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