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

Emerging Ideas Exchange

Recognizing the synergy between the goals of Achieving the Dream and AAC&U's Roadmap, three community colleges that belong to both organizations shared their roadmap projects with colleagues at the annual Achieving the Dream conference in Baltimore, MD on February 18, 2015. The joint effort was supported by AAC&U. The colleges shared their roadmap projects during the Emerging Ideas Exchange, a session that highlights new strategies that show great promise. Lane Community College (OR) featured *GPS Guide to Student Learning, Engagement and Navigation.* Miami Dade College (FL) shared *Roadmap to Completion.* And CCAC showcased *Roadmap to Your Destination.*

To learn more about the Roadmap Leadership Institutions, visit AAC&U's project website.

Issues Facing Early Intervention
By Norm Downey, Perkins Grant Director

Early Intervention has existed at CCAC for about 20 years, with its roots going back to a Title III grant in the mid-nineties. It became a mainstay of the Perkins Grant in the early 2000's and was used to provide services to the college's Career & Technical Education students. During this time, the college's ITS staff added Early Intervention to the web screens of CCAC Central e-Services. With this improvement over the old paper-based system, CCAC won a 2005 League for Innovation Award for its Online Early Intervention System. In the fall of 2008, Early Intervention was adopted as a college-wide student success initiative by the college's Achieving the Dream committee and by doing so, expanded Early Intervention's scope to include all students enrolled in credit courses, including developmental courses.

Early Intervention, which runs for the first ⅓ of the term, has four simple goals:

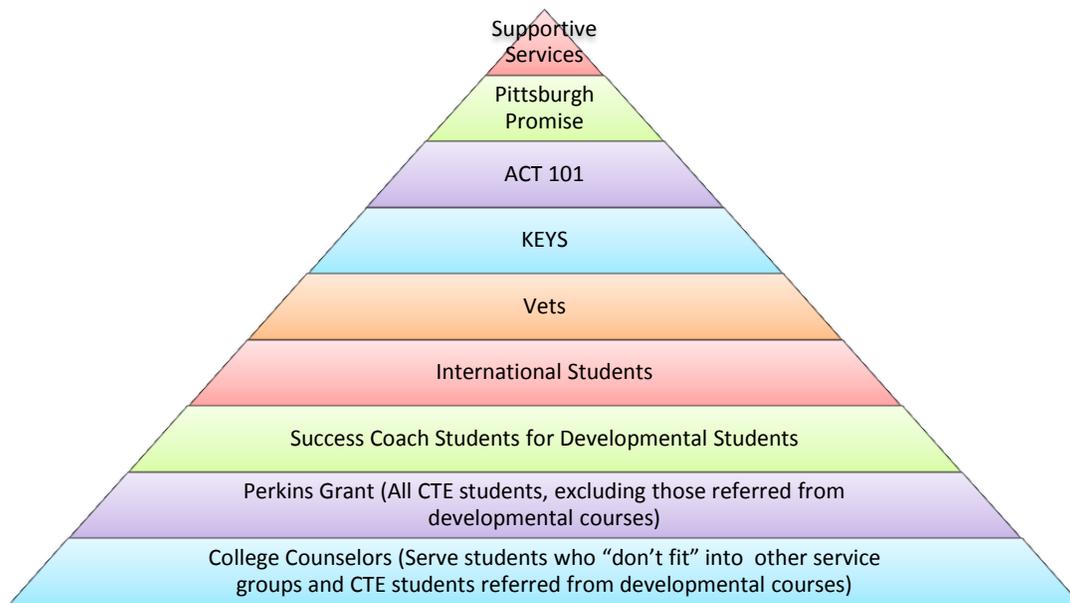- Reach struggling students as early in the term as possible,

- Connect struggling students to college resources to resolve their academic issues,
- Help students to maintain or improve their GPA, and
- Improve student retention rates.

The web referral screens that faculty use on CCAC Central include several check boxes for behaviors typical of struggling students, and includes items such as:

- Late, leaves early, has poor attendance,
- Does not submit work on time,
- Poor participation or inattentive, and
- A comments section where faculty can provide specific information about the referral.

Students referred for attendance problems are issued an automated e-mail that reminds them of the importance of regular class attendance, recommends that they discuss their class progress with their instructor and outlines the procedures for withdrawing from a course.

All other referrals, called Academic Challenge referrals, are sorted by location, program, student type and course type (developmental versus non-developmental). Students referred for Academic Challenges are served by the student services group in the Early Intervention hierarchy where they make their first match. The hierarchy pyramid is shown below. For example, a KEYS student in Career and Technical Education program would be served by KEYS rather than Perkins since KEYS comes "before" Perkins in the hierarchy of student services groups.

Supportive Services
Pittsburgh Promise
ACT 101
KEYS
Vets
International Students
Success Coach Students for Developmental Students
Perkins Grant (All CTE students, excluding those referred from developmental courses)
College Counselors (Serve students who "don't fit" into other service groups and CTE students referred from developmental courses)

Upon receipt of the referral, student services staff will attempt to contact the referred students to work with them to resolve their academic barriers and, if necessary, refer the student to additional college resources such as Math Cafés, Student Lingo, tutoring, financial aid, registration, etc. A feedback e-mail detailing the final disposition of the referral is sent to referring faculty members when the intervention is closed and includes the staff member's comments, dates of attempted contact and any actions or referrals taken.

There are several issues facing Early Intervention, including the number of referrals, student's final grades in referred courses, quality of the referrals from faculty and the interventions themselves, including the quality of the feedback to faculty.

Over time the number of referrals per term has fluctuated from a high of near 1,200 to a low of near 500. Referral statistics from the last four terms are shown below. In the fall of 2014, we used a new flyer created by the college's Marketing department to promote the use of Early Intervention amongst faculty. The result was a dramatic increase in the number of referrals from the previous fall. However, referrals dropped precipitously in the spring to the lowest level in years.

	15SP	14FA	14SP	13FA
Total referrals	550	**1110**	679	644
Number of referred students	506	**1002**	626	602
Attendance referrals	126	**263**	225	144
Academic challenges referrals	424	**847**	454	500
Number of course with referrals	164	**295**	214	198
Referrals from developmental courses	87	**271**	137	170
Number of faculty making referrals	100	**170**	131	115

Furthermore, final grade statistics from fall 2014 were not favorable. The chart below shows the grade outcomes for Academic Challenge referrals. The chart shows a comparison of students with a recorded intervention (WRI) – or those students who were **successfully contacted** by one of our student services groups versus those students without a recorded intervention (NRI – No Recorded Intervention), or more precisely, those students who had **no contact** with student services stemming from the Early Intervention referral. The data would seem to indicate no difference in the pass rate and only a slight increase in the withdraw rate.

Academic Challenges Grade Distribution Chart (FA14)

Grade	WRI%	NRI%
Pass	39.5%	39.5%
Fail	40.4%	46.0%
Withdraw	20.1%	14.5%

WRI%   NRI%
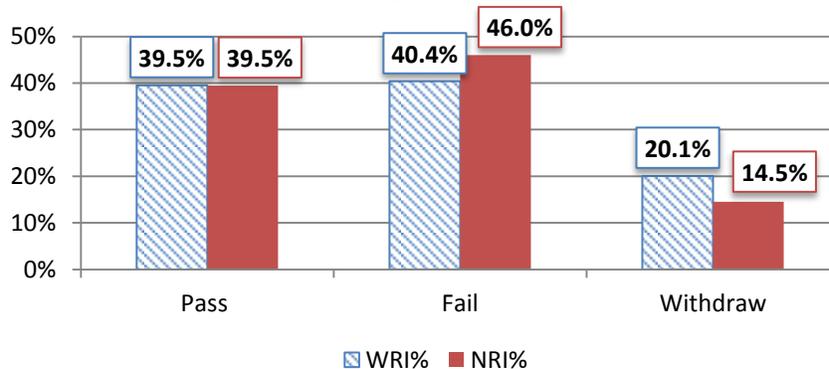
Complicating matters are the nature of some of the referrals themselves. Less than half of the incoming referrals for spring 2015 included a faculty comment making it difficult for student services to immediately grasp the problems facing the student. Some referrals are more matters of classroom management that cannot be address via Early Intervention. Also, less than half of the students are informed that they are being referred. Therefore, when student services staff do successfully contact a student who has not previously been informed of the referral, the student often has a strong negative reaction and refuses the help being offered.

In fall 2014, 41% of all Academic Challenge referrals had no recorded intervention. There are several reasons that this could happen. In some cases, it is virtually impossible reach certain students. For those referrals, the faculty received feedback indicating a series of failed contact attempts. Quality feedback is crucial in closing the loop and the lack of quality feedback has been cited in past surveys as faculty's chief complaint about Early Intervention.

Early Intervention, Early Alert or Warning programs have long been a staple of community college retention strategies. In Alan Seidman's 2005 book, *College Student Retention: Formula for Student Success*, he states, that Retention equals Early Identification of at-risk behaviors plus **Early Intervention** plus Intensive and Continuous Intervention. He also states, "For intervention programs and services to be successful they must be powerful enough to effect change."

In the past, we have conducted surveys to learn what problems and concerns the faculty and staff have with Early Intervention. In addressing these issues, we have extended Early Intervention to the first full ⅓ of the term, split referrals into the Academic Challenges and Attendance groupings, automated the referral sorting process and created scripts for use by student services staff. But surveys only go so far.

I believe that Early Intervention can work and can be an important retention tool for us. I would like you to contact me to serve on a working group to address the problems facing Early Intervention. It's important to have a good mix of student services staff and faculty from across the college. If you're interested in improving Early Intervention, contact me at (412) 237-4670, ndowney@ccac.edu or visit me at 312 Byers Hall.

Reading First Fall 2014 Results

In fall 2011, CCAC implemented a policy requiring all first-time, degree-seeking students who score into the lowest-level of developmental reading to enroll in DVS 060/070 in their first semester. In fall 2014, the Reading First population included 570 students, and 69% of the population enrolled in DVS 060/070 as required.

The results are consistent with previous years, students who enrolled in DVS060/070 were more likely to be in good academic standing at the end of their first term (Table 1) and had higher fall-to-spring retention rates (Table 2) than those who did not enroll in DVS 060/070 as required. These patterns hold true for Pell students and African American students. Sixty-two percent of students completed DVS 060/070 with a C or better compared to 57% of Pell and 47% of African American students (Table 3).

GPA Success:

Fall 2014 Cohort	Did not enroll in DVS 060/070		Enrolled in DVS 060/070	
	% GPA 2.0+	Valid N	% GPA 2.0+	Valid N
Total	39%	179	52%	391
Pell	36%	122	47%	177
African American	28%	68	39%	169

Table 1

Retention:

Fall 2014 Cohort	Did not enroll in DVS 060/070		Enrolled in DVS 060/070	
	Fall-Spring Retention	Valid N	Fall-Spring Retention	Valid N
Total	52%	179	70%	391
Pell	53%	122	66%	177
African American	56%	68	60%	169

Table 2

Reading Success:

Fall 2014 Cohort		Enrolled in DVS 060/070	
		Reading Success	Valid N
Total		62%	391
Pell		57%	177
African American		47%	169

Table 3

SDS-102 Results for Fall 2014

The original SDS-102 policy requiring the lowest-level developmental students to enroll in the one credit student success course was implemented in fall 2009. The current policy, implemented in fall 2012, expanded the required population to all full-time associate's degree-seeking students who placed into all three developmental areas (including ESL), regardless of level. In fall 2014, the required population included 548 students, and 77% of the population enrolled in SDS-102.

The results are consistent with previous years. Students who enrolled in SDS-102 were more likely to be in good academic standing at the end of their first term (Table 4) and had higher fall-to-spring retention rates (Table 5) than those who did not enroll in SDS-102 as required. When the data is disaggregated by population, the results are similar for the Pell group but not for the African American students who were less successful and had lower retention rates than students who did not enroll in SDS-102.

GPA Success:

Fall 2014 Cohort	Did not Enroll		Enrolled in SDS-102	
	% GPA 2.0+	Valid N	% GPA 2.0+	Valid N
Total	48%	125	56%	423
Pell	25%	97	75%	298
African American	44%	57	38%	144

Table 4

Retention:

Fall 2014 Cohort	Did not Enroll		Enrolled in SDS-102	
	Fall-Spring Retention	Valid N	Fall-Spring Retention	Valid N
Total	66%	125	74%	423
Pell	65%	97	71%	298
African American	68%	57	66%	144

Table 5

Classroom Assessment Summaries

The deadline for the spring CAT submission is May 21, 2015. Everyone who submits a CAT Summary will receive a certificate of participation. Adjuncts are encouraged to participate!

Send your CAT summaries to the Assessment Advisory Group at aslcommittee@ccac.edu.

Classroom Assessment Summary Sheet

https://www.ccac.edu/Assessment_of_Student_Learning.aspx

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