

## NEWS RELEASE



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### ***Mindset and Success in Community Colleges***

AUSTIN, TX –

*A Mind at Work: Maximizing the Relationship Between Mindset and Student Success*, a report released today by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (the Center), indicates that students who have more productive academic mindsets are more engaged and have higher GPAs.

“Community colleges are all about making sure students are successful, but many of the students who enroll at community colleges have already been told they don’t belong,” said Evelyn Waiwaiole, Executive Director of the Center. “Educating students about the power of mindset can help them change the way they feel about past failures, which can lead to more engagement—and, in turn, more successful students.”

Academic mindset encompasses students’ beliefs about the ways learning and intelligence work. Almost 70 percent of students agreed that they could change their intelligence a lot, and 82 percent agreed that they were confident they could keep up with their coursework. While the majority of students are confident in some areas of academic mindset, student responses indicating a nonproductive mindset tended to cluster in two areas: testing and math.

- Forty-two percent of students disagreed or responded neutrally as to whether they could do well on tests, even when they were difficult.
- Forty-four percent of students disagreed or responded neutrally as to whether they could change their intelligence a lot in math.

To help colleges help their students have more productive mindsets, the report presents case studies, such as one with promising results at Seattle Central College that is based on the work of Carnegie Math Pathways.

“Changing students’ mindsets requires rethinking our everyday interactions with them,” said Waiwaiole. “Are we connecting their coursework, including math, to their long-term goals? Do our students feel like they are part of the college community? How are we talking to them about bad grades on tests? Are we sharing examples of our own learning processes?”

The report also highlights findings from nontraditional-age versus traditional-age students. In short, nontraditional-age students—those defined as age 25 or older—adopted more of a productive mindset than their younger peers in some areas.

More than 82,000 students from 159 colleges responded to items about academic mindset on the 2018 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (*CCSSE*), which gathers information from students in the spring term about their experiences throughout the academic year.

The report’s supporting materials include discussion questions for colleges, a tool that connects Center survey items with the four components of academic mindset, focus group guides, and video clips from focus groups that the Center conducted with students and faculty about academic mindset.

The Center for Community College Student Engagement is a service and research initiative of the Program in Higher Education Leadership in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin.