

ENGAGING STUDENTS, CHALLENGING THE ODDS



Acknowledgments

To the students ... those who learn from us and those who teach us; those so quick we struggle to keep up and those who struggle because we move too quickly; those who know exactly where they're headed, and those who still believe that the only reason they're in college is because someone made a terrible, wonderful mistake.

To those who skip class to care for a sick child, run to class because the subway was late, or simply march to a different drummer; to those who challenge us and those whose courage touches our souls.

To each and every student, we say "thank you." We are thankful to know them, even if just a little. And we are grateful to them for the opportunity, with their participation and sacrifice and hard work, to make good on America's promise.

To all community college people — faculty, administrators, presidents — who daily undertake what should be recognized as some of the most important work in America, thank you. If we keep our promises, we will be indispensably helpful in ensuring that America keeps hers.

— Kay McClenney

From Keeping America's Promise: Challenges for Community Colleges (2004)

Partially supported by grants from

The Houston Endowment, Inc.

Lumina Foundation for Education

MetLife Foundation

Co-sponsored by

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning



Contents

Students Who Challenge the Odds	2
Characteristics and Challenges of Community College Students	4
A Closer Look at High-Risk Students	5
<i>Academically Underprepared Students: Investments with High Dividends</i>	
<i>Students of Color: The Women and the Men</i>	
<i>First-Generation Students: An Opportunity To Raise Aspirations</i>	
<i>Students 25 and Older: More Focus and Engagement, Particularly for Women</i>	
Part-Time Students: Now You See Them	12
The CCSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice	14
Reaching for Excellence	15
<i>Active and Collaborative Learning</i>	
<i>Student Effort</i>	
<i>Academic Challenge</i>	
<i>Student-Faculty Interaction</i>	
<i>Support for Learners</i>	
CCFSSE: A First Look	20
<i>Through the Eyes of Faculty Members</i>	
<i>In the Eye of the Beholder</i>	
<i>Making the Most of All Faculty Members' Time</i>	
Overview of 2005 CCSSE Respondents	23
CCSSE National Advisory Board	24





Lori Gates
Parkland College (IL)

Lori Gates, a 43-year-old first-generation student, lives with her husband, 17-year-old son, and mother-in-law. She attends school part-time and works 20 hours per week at Parkland's adult re-entry center.

Gates praises Parkland for catering to all students — younger, older, those new to the school, and those ready to graduate. "They have a good academic counseling center and an adult re-entry center that helps adult students get restarted," she explains. "At these centers, they give you information about what courses to take, and they address specific needs, like my testing anxiety."

Gates is working toward an associate degree in accounting and plans to earn a bachelor's degree in business. She has been consistently enrolled in college since 2000, more than 20 years after she first began college. "Like a lot of young kids, I dropped out of college after I met and married my husband. I had a steady job, and I worked my way up through 12 years," she says. "Then when I started looking for a job, I realized that a lot of places don't want 12 years of experience. They want a piece of paper showing that you know what you're talking about because you studied it."

Students Who Challenge the Odds

Each year, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (*CCSSE*) presents the results of its annual survey. These results give community colleges objective and relevant data about students' experiences at their colleges so they can better understand how effectively they are engaging their students and identify areas for improvement.

This year, the *CCSSE* report also includes results of the first administration of the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (*CCFSSE*), which provides insights into faculty perceptions and practices. Because many items on *CCSSE* and *CCFSSE* are aligned, the report includes side-by-side views of faculty members' and students' responses.

AS THE RESULTS OF BOTH SURVEYS DEMONSTRATE, using data to assess the student experience provides powerful, and sometimes surprising, results. After all, our personal data — each person's observations and individual experiences — provide anecdotal information that does not necessarily reflect the experience of all, or even most, students. Only systematically collected data can help us understand the typical student experience, and that understanding is essential for any institution seeking improvement in student learning, persistence, and completion of academic goals.

This year's *CCSSE* report gives a voice to community college students, particularly those who have to overcome the greatest odds to complete their education. There are consistent, unacceptable gaps between outcomes for high-risk students and their peers. To better understand these gaps — and, even more important, to give colleges tools to address them —

CCSSE has looked at findings for academically underprepared students, students of color, first-generation students, nontraditional college-age learners, and part-time students.

The 2005 *CCSSE* data show that when there are differences in engagement between low- and high-risk students, the students typically described as high-risk — including academically underprepared students, students of color, first-generation students, and nontraditional-age learners — are *more engaged* in their college experience than their peers. For example, they are less likely to come to class unprepared, they interact more frequently with instructors outside the classroom, and they use support services more often.

On the other hand, many of these students have lower aspirations and — especially in the case of academically underprepared students, students of color, and low-income students — show

less successful outcomes in terms of lower grades and lower persistence rates. In other words, they are working harder, but achieving lower results.

At first glance, these findings may be unexpected. After all, a large and growing body of evidence shows a positive correlation between student engagement and student outcomes.

But a closer look suggests that the *CCSSE* data are more provocative than surprising. Consider these points:

1. Only about one-half of community college students return to college for their second year of study, and far too many leave before completing their first semester. High-risk students, moreover, drop out at a higher rate than their peers. Underprepared students (those who require developmental education), for example, are more likely to drop out in the first semester and less likely to return for their second semester. Drop-out rates, moreover, grow in proportion to the number of developmental courses the students need.
2. It is very likely that for some high-risk students, even the most engaging educational experience will not be powerful enough to offset the combination of financial, academic, personal, and work-related challenges they face.
3. Given the positive, well-documented relationship between engagement and outcomes, we might speculate that among high-risk students, the most engaged are more likely, in general, to stay in college, whereas the least engaged are more likely to be among those who drop out in the first semester. If this is the case, the *CCSSE* results reflect the views of the generally more engaged high-risk students. Alternatively, we might speculate that high-risk students are less prepared for college and therefore must be more engaged to persist in their studies — and to achieve goals that lower-risk students can reach with less effort and engagement. Whether these speculations are accurate is an issue for continuing study and analysis.

The inescapable conclusion from the data, however, is that where there are differences in engagement levels between low- and high-risk students, the community college students we normally describe as high-risk generally are more engaged than their peers. This point has significant implications for community colleges and their students. These results provide insight into how community colleges can help more students — high-risk, low-risk, and everyone in between — stick with their studies until they achieve their educational goals.

Why Student Engagement Matters

Research shows that the more actively engaged students are — with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter they study — the more likely they are to learn and to stay in college until they achieve their academic goals.* Student engagement, therefore, is a valuable yardstick for assessing whether, and to what extent, an institution's educational practices are likely to produce successful results — more students across all groups learning at higher levels and achieving their academic goals.

A growing body of research has identified institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement, and the *CCSSE* survey focuses on these elements of students' experiences. *CCSSE* works with participating colleges to administer the survey, which measures students' levels of engagement in a variety of areas. The colleges then receive their survey results, along with guidance and analysis they can use to improve their programs and services for students.

All *CCSSE* work is grounded in research about what helps improve student outcomes. *CCSSE* results are public and available at www.ccsse.org.

*Kuh, G.D., *The National Survey of Student Engagement: Conceptual Framework and Overview of Psychometric Properties*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning, 2001.

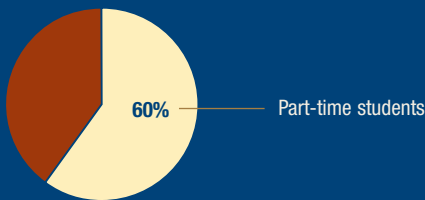
Pascarella, E., and P. Terenzini, *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005.

For additional references on student engagement, visit www.ccsse.org.

Community College Students Contend with Competing Priorities

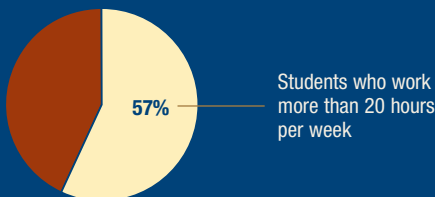
Students' commitments to work and family mean that they spend limited time on campus — making it both more difficult and essential for colleges to engage them when they are there.

Most Students Are Enrolled Part-Time



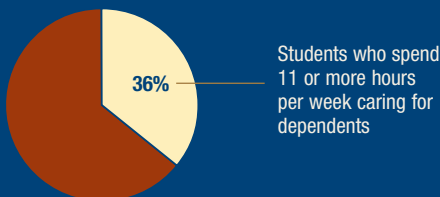
Source: IPEDS, Fall 2003.

Most Students Work



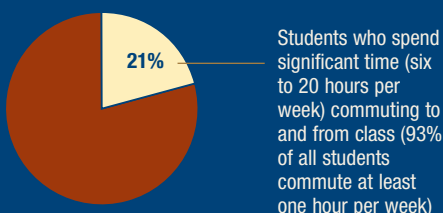
Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Many Students Care for Dependents



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Most Student Commute, Many Spend Significant Time Commuting



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Characteristics and Challenges of Community College Students

COMMUNITY COLLEGES EDUCATE a diverse mix of students with dramatically varying goals; significant demands on their time; and a range of personal, academic, and financial challenges.

Students' Goals

Indicate which of the following are your reasons/goals for attending this college.

	Primary goal	Secondary goal	Not a goal
Complete a certificate program	29%	19%	52%
Obtain an associate degree	57%	21%	23%
Transfer to a four-year college or university	48%	21%	31%
Obtain or update job-related skills	41%	26%	33%
Self-improvement/personal enjoyment	40%	34%	26%
Change careers	30%	16%	54%

Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Students' Plans after the Current Semester

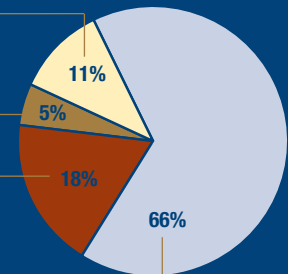
When asked when they plan to take classes at this college again, 23% had no plan to return or were uncertain about their future plans.

I will accomplish my goal(s) during this term and will not be returning

I have no current plan to return

Uncertain

Within the next 12 months



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Reasons Students Might Not Return to College

How likely is it that the following issues would cause you to withdraw from class or from this college?

Students responding "likely" or "very likely"

Transfer to a four-year college or university	47%
Lack of finances	45%
Working full-time	37%
Caring for dependents	29%
Academically unprepared	17%

Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

A Closer Look at High-Risk Students

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to get a clear picture of engagement for all students without disaggregating the data — that is, breaking it down into student groups (e.g., racial and ethnic groups, developmental students, part-time students, and so on). Comparing engagement and outcomes for various student groups, particularly high-risk student groups, is the only way to evaluate whether all students are engaging in their education at similarly high levels.

Looking at student engagement for various groups of at-risk students often reveals gaps in engagement and performance that merit further attention — and can help colleges identify the best engagement strategies for their students. This type of analysis is critical for community colleges that want to improve outcomes for those who bring the greatest challenges to college with them — and who stand to gain the most from their community college experience.

Students are considered high risk if they exhibit several factors that are shown to jeopardize educational persistence and attainment. Students attending community colleges are three to four times more likely than their counterparts in four-year colleges and universities to reflect four or more of the key risk factors. The risk factors are:

- ★ being academically underprepared for college-level work;

- ★ not entering college directly after high school;
- ★ attending college part-time;
- ★ being a single parent;
- ★ being financially independent (i.e., students who rely on their own income or savings and whose parents are not sources of income for meeting college costs);
- ★ caring for children at home;
- ★ working more than 30 hours per week; and
- ★ being a first-generation college student.

The analyses reported on the following pages show intriguing patterns of engagement for selected groups of at-risk students. It is important to note, however, that although this report considers the risk factors one at a time, students often experience them in combinations. And combining the risk factors multiplies students' risks of not achieving their educational goals. Finally, additional insights into these findings will be gained from further study, including the use of statistical controls.

Academically Underprepared Students: Investments with High Dividends

More than half (53%) of *CCSSE* respondents report that they have taken or plan to take a developmental math, reading, or writing course, which indicates that they are not academically prepared for

college-level work. By several measures, these students are more engaged with their education than their academically prepared peers. Academically underprepared students are more likely to:

- ★ **Talk about career plans** with an instructor or advisor often or very often (27% vs. 21% of academically prepared students).
- ★ **Work harder** than they thought they could to meet an instructor's expectations often or very often (53% vs. 43% of academically prepared students).
- ★ **Prepare two or more drafts** of a paper before turning it in often or very often (56% vs. 42% of academically prepared students).
- ★ **Write more papers or reports** (29% vs. 23% of academically prepared students report writing 11 or more papers during the school year).

In addition, these students report that their colleges help them develop the skills and abilities they need to succeed. Academically underprepared students report that their colleges:

- ★ Encourage them, either “quite a bit” or “very much,” to spend significant amounts of **time studying** (75% vs. 64% of academically prepared students), help them cope with **non-academic responsibilities** (28% vs. 20% of academically prepared students), and provide the **financial support** they need to afford their education (51% vs. 39% of academically prepared students).



Mike Klimansky
El Paso Community College (TX)

Mike Klimansky, a 20-year-old full-time student, plans to transfer to the University of Texas at El Paso. He started his work at El Paso Community College with developmental courses, and he now is doing college-level work in all of his classes except for mathematics.

Asked about his experience at El Paso Community College, he says, “It is a blessing to be there, to be able to get my education.”

Klimansky credits his instructors and the college’s writing center and other support services for his success at the college. “The way Mr. Casey taught [English] helped me learn to write essays,” he recalls. “I learned more from him in one semester than in all my years of English in high school.”

- ★ Helped them, either “quite a bit” or “very much,” **write more clearly and effectively** (66% vs. 48% of academically prepared students), **speak more clearly and effectively** (60% vs. 44% of academically prepared students), **think critically and analytically** (70% vs. 61% of academically prepared students), **solve numerical problems** (60% vs. 44% of academically prepared students), and **develop clearer career goals** (60% vs. 48% of academically prepared students).

Academically underprepared students are significantly more likely to use and be satisfied with student services, including academic advising/planning, career counseling, tutoring, skill labs, computer labs, and financial aid advising. Finally, they report lower grades overall; in *CCSSE* research studies, student records substantiate these reports.

Reflections on Results

In summary, these results indicate that academically underprepared students, in general, are exerting more effort, experiencing greater academic challenge, experiencing more support from their college, using college services more extensively, and reporting more academic gain than their more adequately prepared peers. In other words, these

students are connecting with their colleges in ways that may help compensate for the gaps in their previous educational experiences.

Almost 50% of all first-time community college students (and in some settings significantly more) are assessed as underprepared for the academic demands of college-level work. Colleges that design strategies to retain these students find that effective remediation pays high dividends. First, students who benefit from effective developmental education have the opportunity to be successful in subsequent college-level studies — an opportunity that would not exist without developmental education.

Second, at its best, developmental education serves its intended purpose: leveling the playing field so that students who begin in developmental courses have at least the same chances of completing a degree or transferring as their peers who began their studies in college-level courses.*

Finally, students who successfully complete remedial courses tend to become productively employed: 16% as professionals; 54% in mid-level, white-collar, or technical positions; and 20% as high-skill, blue-collar workers. Only 9% remain in unskilled or low-skill jobs.**

*Roueche, J.E., E. Ely, and S.D. Roueche, *In Pursuit of Excellence*. Washington, DC: Community College Press, 2001.

**McCabe, R.H., *No One to Waste: A Report to Public Decision Makers and Community College Leaders*. Washington, DC: Community College Press, 2000.



Reginald Wright
Southern University at Shreveport (LA)

Nursing student Reginald Wright is 39 years old, retired from the U.S. Air Force, and living with his wife and two children. He appreciates his college for its small class sizes; the services it provides, including information that helped him apply for financial aid; and its instructors.

“Dr. Robinson encouraged group study. She always could tell who was studying and who was not,” he says. “Every day she would ask us questions — the ones who did the work were able to respond.” In fact, Wright was so pleased with Dr. Robinson that after taking her microbiology class, he enrolled in anatomy and physiology because he liked her teaching.

Wright offers this formula for success in college: “Go to school every day. Sit in front of the class. Ask questions.”

Students of Color: The Women and the Men

Almost one-quarter (24%) of 2005 *CCSSE* respondents are black, Hispanic, or Native American, and among the respondents, black women outnumber black men by a factor of two to one. These percentages reflect the *CCSSE* college population overall.

A comparison of students of color (black, Hispanic, and Native American students) and white students shows little difference in engagement on survey items related to active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, or student effort. Students of color, however, report more academic gain in several areas during their college experience and were more likely to credit their college for helping them achieve that gain. For example, looking at responses of “quite a bit” or “very much”:

- ★ 65% of black, Hispanic, and Native American students vs. 54% of white students say their college experience helped them **write more clearly and effectively**.
- ★ 62% of black, Hispanic, and Native American students vs. 49% of white students say their college experience

helped them **speak more clearly and effectively**.

- ★ 59% of black, Hispanic, and Native American students vs. 50% of white students say their college experience helped them **learn to solve numerical problems**.
- ★ 61% of black, Hispanic, and Native American students vs. 52% of white students say their college experience helped them **develop clearer career goals**.

Students of color also are more likely to use and be satisfied with student services, including academic advising/planning, tutoring, skill labs, and financial aid advising. However, they report lower grades overall: 58% of black, Hispanic, and Native American students vs. 72% of white students report overall grade averages of A or B.

Examining Engagement Differences among Black Students

The crisis in black men’s educational success — in terms of the relatively low numbers of black men who enroll in and complete college — is well documented. The *CCSSE* data reveal intriguing engagement differences for black men,

who, although increasingly underrepresented among the ranks of college students, are more engaged in several areas than either black women or students who are not black.

For example, black men are more likely than black women to work with instructors on activities other than coursework often or very often (14% of black men vs. 10% of black women) and participate in college-sponsored activities (28% of black men vs. 16% of black women report spending between one and 20 hours per week on these activities). Black men also are more engaged than nonblack students in these areas.

In addition, black men are more likely than either black women or nonblack students to report that their college helps them cope with nonacademic responsibilities and provides the support they need to thrive socially.

Black women, however, are more engaged than black men in several areas. Black women are more likely to:

- ★ **Discuss ideas from readings or classes** with others outside of class often or very often (57% of black women vs. 45% of black men).



Silvia Costa and Scott White, coordinator of Access Services and instructor of Silvia's library information course.

Silvia Costa **LaGuardia Community College (NY)**

First-generation student Silvia Costa works 40 hours per week off campus as a babysitter and attends college full-time. "I came to this country six years ago, and I came to college only to learn English in a non-credit ESL [English as a Second Language] class," she recalls. "But then I took the test to get into college, and now everything in my life has changed."

Costa, who is studying physical therapy, is grateful to her instructors for teaching her the subject matter, helping her gain valuable time management skills, and encouraging her to pursue her studies.

"I am taking a freshman seminar class about time management, and the things I'm learning in that class helped me change and grow," she says. "I received an achievement award for a library information class. I was so proud on awards night to get an award at the beginning of my college experience."

- ★ **Use the Internet or instant messaging** to work on an assignment often or very often (60% of black women vs. 52% of black men).
- ★ **Find their exams challenging** (42% of black women vs. 31% of black men rate their exams a 6 or 7 on a seven-point scale of difficulty).
- ★ Report that their college encouraged them to spend **significant time studying** (80% of black women vs. 73% of black men say "quite a bit" or "very much").
- ★ **Have plans to continue their studies** (when asked when they plan to take classes at their college again, 24% of black women vs. 31% of black men had no plan to return to their college or were uncertain about their future plans).

Black women are more likely to spend 30 hours or more per week caring for dependents (42% of black women vs. 18% of black men) and to spend slightly more time working for pay.

Black women also spend more time caring for dependents and working for pay — and are more engaged in the areas described above — than nonblack students.

Reflections on Results

Worthy of note is the distinction between the forms of engagement for black women and black men. The women's experiences appear to be more academically oriented, whereas the men's connections emphasize out-of-class and social activities. While black women's time spent caring for family and working may partially explain why they are not involved in more on-campus activities, additional research would be needed to explore the reasons for the differences between black women and men.

In the meantime, community colleges may do well to build on black men's out-of-class interests, connect those interests to the classroom, and engage them more effectively in the earliest weeks of their college experience to increase the numbers of black men who persist and succeed.

"CCSSE acts as an all-important barometer for community college faculty who wish to remain as effective as possible in the classroom."

KEVIN JOSEPH HALES

*Associate Professor of History
Parkland College (IL)*

CCSSE participant, 2003, 2005

First-Generation Students: An Opportunity To Raise Aspirations

More than one-third (37%) of 2005 CCSSE respondents are first-generation students — students whose parents had no college experience. When compared with students who had at least one parent who attended college, first-generation students spend comparable hours working and preparing for class. They spend significantly more time, however, caring for dependents (33% of first-generation students vs. 22% of other students spend more than 30 hours a week caring for dependents). They are significantly less likely to aspire to transfer to a four-year college or university (38% of first-generation students vs. 26% of other students say that transferring is not a goal), and they are more likely to aspire to earn an associate degree or certificate and improve job skills.

First-generation students, however, are more engaged than their peers in several areas. They are more likely to:

- ★ **Come to class prepared** (36% of first-generation students vs. 28% of other students say they never come to class unprepared).
- ★ **Attend class** (58% of first-generation students vs. 44% of other students say they never skip class).

- ★ **Find their exams challenging** (40% of first-generation students vs. 32% of other students rate their exams a 6 or 7 on a seven-point scale of difficulty).

First-generation students also use and are satisfied with financial aid advising more than their peers. Half of first-generation students (50%) vs. 40% of other students use this service often or very often; 56% of first-generation students vs. 46% of other students are very or somewhat satisfied with this service.

Reflections on Results

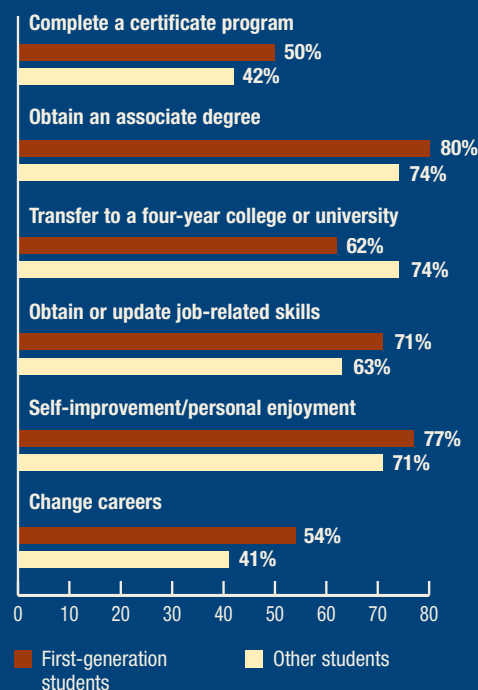
There is not a notable difference between first-generation students' and other students' use of career counseling, but the overall use of this service is low. However, engagement strategies that encourage students to set and pursue goals, such as academic and career advising, can positively affect student retention and, ultimately, student success. These services also can serve to increase students' aspirations. Colleges that seek to improve outcomes for first-generation students might consider making academic and career counseling mandatory or building these services into classroom activities so that they becomes inescapable elements of students' college experience.

“CCSSE keeps us in touch with our students.”

JULIE PACE

*Dean of Service and Performance Excellence
Northwest Vista College (TX)
CCSSE participant, 2002–2005*

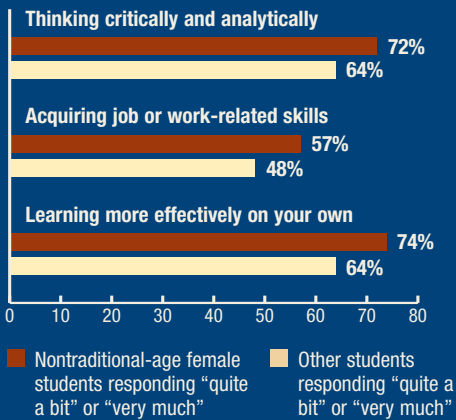
First-Generation Students' Goals (Primary or Secondary)



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

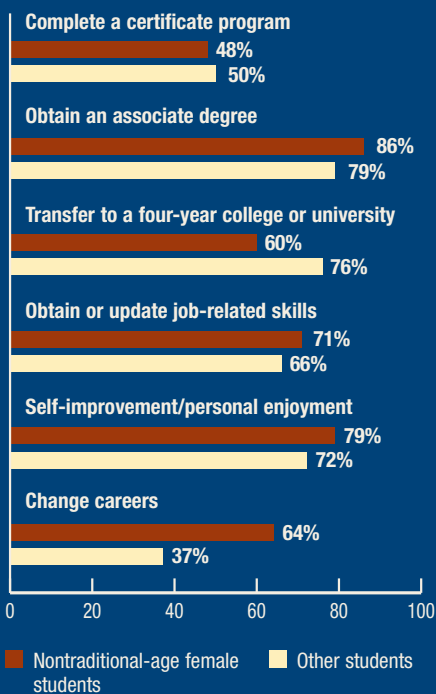
Nontraditional-Age Female Students' Growing Skills

How much has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Nontraditional-Age Female Students' Goals (Primary or Secondary)



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Students 25 and Older: More Focus and Engagement, Particularly for Women

More than one-third (37%) of CCSSE respondents are over age 24, and there are dramatic engagement differences between these nontraditional-age students and their traditional-age (18- to 24-year-old) peers. Nontraditional-age students are more likely to:

- ★ **Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions** often or very often (73% vs. 59% of traditional-age students).
- ★ **Come to class prepared** (42% vs. 22% of traditional-age students say they never come to class unprepared).
- ★ **Attend class** (67% vs. 36% of traditional-age students say they never skip class).
- ★ **Report receiving prompt feedback** from instructors often or very often (61% vs. 51% of traditional-age students).
- ★ **Find their exams challenging** (45% vs. 26% of traditional-age students rated their exams a 6 or 7 on a seven-point scale of difficulty).

These older learners report more favorable relationships with both instructors and administrative personnel, and they spend more time preparing for class (31% of nontraditional-age students vs. 20% of traditional-age students report spending at least 11 hours per week studying). They also spend more time

caring for dependents (44% vs. 12% of traditional-age students report spending more than 30 hours per week caring for dependents).

A Closer Look at Women 25 and Older

Results for one particular group of nontraditional-age learners — women who are 25 and older — are noteworthy. Almost a quarter (23%) of CCSSE respondents are nontraditional-age women, and their survey responses reflect the differences for all nontraditional-age students described above. In addition, nontraditional-age women are more engaged than other students (men and traditional-age women). Nontraditional-age women:

- ★ Are significantly more likely than other students to report that their college experience helped them “quite a bit” or “very much” to **think critically and analytically** (72% vs. 64%), **acquire job or work-related skills** (57% vs. 48%), and **learn more effectively** on their own (74% vs. 66%).
- ★ **Report higher grades** (75% of nontraditional-age women vs. 63% of other students report overall grade averages of A or B).
- ★ **Are more likely to have plans to continue their studies** the following semester (17% of nontraditional-age women vs. 25% of other students say they have no plan to return to college the next semester or are uncertain of their plans).



Maria Ihrabi
Sinclair Community College (OH)

Maria Ihrabi, a 32-year-old first-generation college student, is in her first term of community college. She lives with her husband and three children, ages 5, 6, and 10.

As she finds her way around the campus and tries to get settled, Ihrabi appreciates any efforts to help her meet other students, particularly other new students. “In my business class, the instructor opened up our communication by breaking us into three small groups and giving us the task of answering a question as a group,” she says. “I enjoyed this because I got to talk to, learn from, and work with other students.”

Sinclair also has raised Ihrabi’s aspirations. “I want to get a degree,” she says with conviction. “At first, I only wanted some education, but now I want a degree. I want to set high expectations for my kids.”

Nontraditional-age women, however, indicate that they are more likely to withdraw from college for financial reasons (54% reported that they are likely or very likely to withdraw for financial reasons, compared to 44% of other students). They are significantly less likely to aspire to transfer to a four-year college or university (40% of nontraditional-age women students vs. 24% of other students say that transferring is not a goal), and they are more likely to state changing careers as a goal (64% of nontraditional-age women students vs. 37% of other students).

Finally, more than half (55%) of nontraditional-age women (vs. 15% of other students) spend more than 30 hours per

week caring for dependents who live with them. Despite this time commitment, 13% of nontraditional-age female students — compared with only 6% of other students — spend 21 or more hours per week preparing for class.

Reflections on Results

With age comes focus. Students who are 25 and older — women in particular — appear to have more clearly defined goals and better-developed study habits than their peers. They tend to spend more time on task and to be more active in classrooms — characteristics that add to their value as peer mentors and members of study groups or project teams.

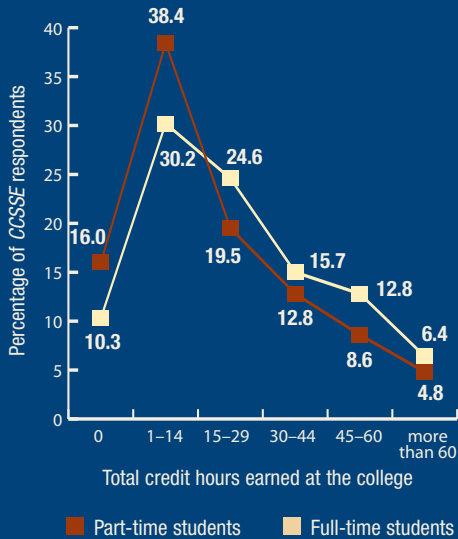
These nontraditional-age women students, however, would benefit from services that seek to raise their aspirations so they get more out of the intensive effort they devote to their studies. Other students might benefit from engagement strategies, such as academic advising and skill labs, that would instill the focus and goals that nontraditional-age female students bring to their college experience. As with all engagement efforts, more community college students are likely to benefit from these strategies if they are, at least in part, integrated into course design.

“At Estrella Mountain Community College, participation in CCSSE has enlivened campuswide discussion and strengthened our commitment to building a climate for improving educational effectiveness and the overall success of our students.”

HOMERO LOPEZ, PH.D.
President
 Estrella Mountain Community College (AZ)
 CCSSE participant, 2004

Note: This analysis of nontraditional-age women and other students excludes students who already hold an associate degree or higher (10% of the 2005 survey respondents) to focus the findings on students working toward a degree or certificate.

Part-Time and Full-Time *CCSSE* Respondents by Credit Hours Earned at the College



A typical semester for a full-time student is 12–15 credit hours. Sixty credits is the typical point at which students obtain an associate degree. If all students who started college completed an associate degree or the first half of a bachelor's degree, the line between one and 60 credits would be flat.

Source: *CCSSE* 2005 data.

Part-Time Students: Now You See Them ...

NATIONALLY, NEARLY TWO-THIRDS of community college students attend school part-time, and these part-time students are black, white, Asian, Hispanic, and international; they are old and young; they are academically well-prepared and underprepared for college. Most of them work; many care for dependents; some endure long commutes. As a result, many part-time students come to campus for their classes and then leave immediately to attend to other responsibilities.

Survey results viewed in terms of enrollment status provide insights that can help community colleges better understand — and address — the challenges of engaging part-time students.

Part-time students are significantly *less* likely than full-time students to:

- ★ **Make a class presentation** often or very often (22% vs. 33% of full-time students). In addition, 41% of part-time students vs. 23% of full-time students say they never made a class presentation.
- ★ **Work on a project that required integrating ideas or information** from various sources often or very often (52% vs. 68% of full-time students).
- ★ **Work with other students on projects during class** often or very often (42% vs. 50% of full-time students).

- ★ **Work with other students outside of class** to prepare class assignments often or very often (16% vs. 25% of full-time students).
- ★ **Prepare two or more drafts** of a paper before turning it in often or very often (46% vs. 56% of full-time students).
- ★ **Use e-mail to communicate with an instructor** often or very often (32% vs. 45% of full-time students).
- ★ **Discuss grades or assignments** with an instructor often or very often (39% vs. 50% of full-time students).
- ★ **Talk about career plans** with an instructor often or very often (19% vs. 29% of full-time students).

Significantly more part-time students take evening or weekend classes (46% of part-time students vs. 12% of full-time students say they most frequently enroll in such classes). And part-time students are more likely to attend class — 54% of part-time students vs. 41% of full-time students report that they never skip class. But they are less likely to report that their college experience, either “quite a bit” or “very much,” helped them to:

- ★ **Write more clearly and effectively** (55% of part-time vs. 64% of full-time students).
- ★ **Speak more clearly and effectively** (49% of part-time vs. 58% of full-time students).

Note: This analysis of part- and full-time students excludes students who already hold an associate degree or higher (10% of the 2005 survey respondents) to focus the findings on students working toward a degree or certificate.



Elisa Plummer

Dona Ana Branch Community College — NMSU (NM)

Elisa Plummer, 39 and a part-time student, first started community college when her children were young, but she stopped because of the demands on her time. Now that her children are 9, 14, and 15, she is determined to earn her degree no matter what it takes.

“English is my second language, so I have to work more,” she explains. “You don’t have any idea how difficult it is when we’re barely able to speak the language and we’re taking college-level classes.” She praises the tutoring center, which provides support in both Spanish and English.

“Sometimes, when I’m doing a paper over and over and over — it has to be as good as the other students’ papers — I sometimes feel like I want to quit, but I’m not quitting,” she says fiercely. “I know I can do it if I just keep trying.”

- ★ **Solve numerical problems** (51% of part-time vs. 58% of full-time students).
- ★ **Gain information about career opportunities** (46% of part-time vs. 54% of full-time students).

Part-time students also report less use of and satisfaction with student services, including academic advising/planning, financial aid advising, and computer lab.

Reflections on Results

A concern raised by these findings is that part-time students appear to have educational experiences that are *qualitatively different* from those of their full-time peers. It is noteworthy, for example, that part-time students engage in fewer collaborative practices and less interaction with faculty than do full-time students *even within the classroom setting*. Ideally, part-time students would spend at least as great a proportion of

their in-classroom time making presentations or working with other students on projects, and it is more likely that they would do so if such activities were intentional features of their classes.

The finding that disproportionately high numbers of part-time students take evening and weekend classes, although not surprising, may help explain the differences in part-time students’ involvement in effective educational practice. But it also points to two related issues. First, in settings where evening and weekend classes are predominantly taught by adjunct faculty, colleges will recognize from these results that the challenge of engaging part-time students is related to the challenge of engaging part-time *faculty* in the kinds of professional development opportunities that will help them use more engaging strategies in the classroom. Second, colleges face the challenge of ensuring that academic and student support services are

available at the times and places convenient to part-time students. Moreover, part-time students likely would benefit from academic advising and other engagement strategies that were inescapably built into coursework or into the college intake and registration processes.

As the data for part-time students indicate, engaging students who spend limited time on campus may be colleges’ most difficult engagement task. Given the number of part-time community college students, however, it is likely that efforts to engage and educate community college students will have limited value if colleges cannot successfully reach those who attend part-time.

“CCSSE enables us to identify our strengths, as well as those areas where we need to create a sharper focus in order to continually enhance student retention and academic success.”

EBENEZER KOLAJO

*Director of Institutional Research
Cecil Community College (MD)
CCSSE participant, 2004*

CCSSE Opposes Ranking

CCSSE opposes using its data to rank colleges for a number of reasons.

- ★ There is no single number that can adequately — or accurately — describe a college's performance; most colleges will perform relatively well on some benchmarks and need improvement on others.
- ★ Each community college's performance should be considered in terms of its mission, institutional focus, and student characteristics.
- ★ Because of differences in these areas — and variations in college resources — comparing survey results between individual institutions serves little constructive purpose and likely will be misleading.
- ★ Demographically, CCSSE member colleges and their students are representative of the national population of credit-enrolled community college students. However, because of the growing incidence of statewide participation in the survey, data in any given year will reflect some states more extensively than others.
- ★ More important, the 257 CCSSE 2005 member colleges are a self-selected group. Their choice to participate in the survey demonstrates their interest in assessing and improving their educational practices, and it distinguishes them. Ranking within this group of colleges — those willing to step up to serious self-assessment and public reporting — might discourage participation and certainly would paint an incomplete picture.
- ★ Ranking does not serve a purpose related to improving student outcomes. Improvement over time — where a particular college is now, compared with where it wants to be — likely is the best gauge of a college's efforts to enhance student learning and persistence.

The CCSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

BENCHMARKS ARE GROUPS OF CONCEPTUALLY RELATED SURVEY ITEMS that address key areas of student engagement. CCSSE's five benchmarks denote areas that educational research has shown to be important in quality educational practice, and they provide useful ways to look at each college's performance.

Community colleges use the benchmarks to compare their performance with that of similar institutions and with the full CCSSE population of community colleges; compare their own performance across benchmarks and across time; and identify areas in need of improvement. Because the results are public, benchmarks also can stimulate conversation — within colleges and among policymakers — about effective educational practices.

The CCSSE benchmarks are **active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners**. To see descriptions of the benchmarks or the specific survey items associated with each benchmark, visit www.ccsse.org.

What Are Benchmark Scores?

Every college has a score for each benchmark. These individual benchmark scores were computed by averaging the scores on survey items that compose that benchmark. Benchmark scores are standardized so that the mean — the average of all participating students — always is 50 and the standard deviation always is 25.

A valuable use of benchmarks is to see an individual college's deviation from the mean — or better yet, its comparison to a standard higher than the mean. The standardized score provides an easy way to assess whether an individual college is performing above or below the mean (50) on each benchmark. The standardized scores make it possible for colleges to compare their own performance across benchmarks and with groups of similar colleges.

Reaching for Excellence

Affirming the spirit of benchmarking, on the following pages, CCSSE offers examples of promising educational practices at colleges that demonstrate outstanding performance on particular benchmarks. These are examples of both innovative thinking and intentional engagement. CCSSE urges all participating colleges to continually ask whether current performance — both nationally and at their colleges — is good enough and to use their data to make the most important comparison for themselves and their students: where they are now, contrasted with where they want to be.

Reaching for Excellence: Active and Collaborative Learning

THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES were among the top performers within their size category on the active and collaborative learning benchmark. This list, presented in alphabetical order without regard to size, also indicates colleges that serve high proportions of at-risk students.

- ★ Chandler-Gilbert Community College (AZ)
- ★ El Paso Community College (TX)*+†
- ★ Guilford Technical Community College (NC)*†
- ★ North Harris Montgomery Community College District (TX)*†
- ★ Northwest Vista College (TX)*†
- ★ Skagit Valley College (WA)†
- ★ Southern University at Shreveport (LA)*+†
- ★ Vermilion Community College (MN)†

Intentional Engagement Strategies

SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE (WA) requires participation in a learning community for a transfer degree. In recent years, the college has seen an increasing number of students, many of them Hispanic, who are first-generation students and from low-income families. In response, faculty members are employing strategies in learning communities to help students understand the complexity of larger communities, including members who often are “invisible.” Last year, for

example, research conducted by students in *Viva! Mexican Voices/American Dreams* (a learning community combining sociology and literature) included intensive interviews with local community leaders and statewide Hispanic leaders.

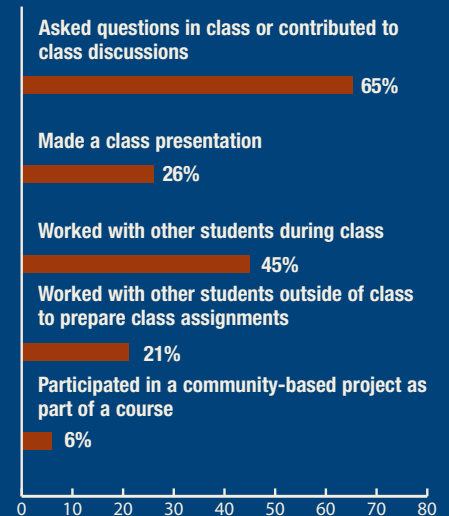
Over the past decade, **CHANDLER-GILBERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE** (AZ) has emphasized faculty training in active and collaborative learning for both residential and adjunct faculty. Professional development includes how to design learning communities, actively engage students in group discussions, and move students into the community to participate in service learning. First-, second-, and third-year faculty also are involved in a learning community for faculty that provides mentoring and support focused on improving teaching methods.

In **NORTH HARRIS MONTGOMERY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT** (TX), faculty are strongly encouraged to include collaborative learning projects in their classes. Instructor-led discussion, hands-on projects, and group work are the primary methods of instruction, rather than lectures. In most classrooms and labs, faculty can access the Web, DVDs, CDs, and video at the touch of a button to use current events as teaching tools. Even the furniture at NHMCCD promotes group work and collaboration. Many classrooms have easily movable tables and chairs that can be arranged in a variety of configurations to allow students to work in groups during class.

Professors at **SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT SHREVEPORT** (LA) provide a variety of opportunities for student involvement in the total learning process. These experiences include mutual probing questions, innovative class presentations and projects, activities such as a quiz bowl, and book reviews. An activity that involves the entire campus community is “The Scavenger Hunt,” sponsored by the library, during which students are challenged to locate information and artifacts of modern and historical nature around the campus.

Key Findings for Active and Collaborative Learning

Students who often or very often ...



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

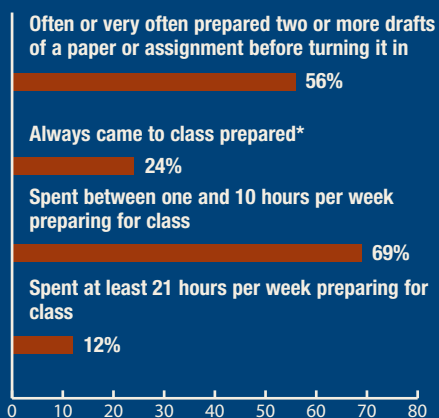
* denotes **minority-serving institutions** (at least 25% of students are black, Hispanic, or Native American).

+ denotes institutions that serve high proportions of **first-generation students** (at least 37% of students — the median for colleges included in the 2005 CCSSE benchmarks — are first-generation).

† denotes institutions that serve high proportions of **academically underprepared students** (at least 53% of students — the median for colleges included in the 2005 CCSSE benchmarks — need developmental education in at least one area).

Key Findings for Student Effort

Full-time students who ...

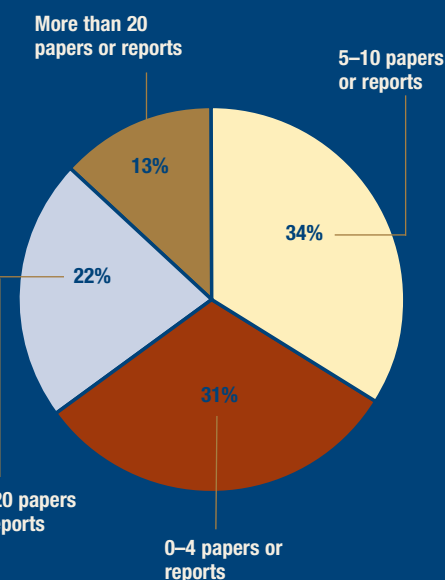


*Note: This survey item asks students how often they “come to class without completing readings or assignments.” Responses of “Never” are reverse coded here.

Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Key Findings for Academic Challenge

Full-time students who wrote papers or reports of any length during the year



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Reaching for Excellence: Student Effort

THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES were among the top performers within their size category on the student effort benchmark. This list, presented in alphabetical order without regard to size, also indicates colleges that serve high proportions of minority, first-generation, and academically underprepared students.

- ★ Community College of Denver (CO)*++
- ★ El Centro College (TX)*++
- ★ El Paso Community College (TX)*++
- ★ Georgia Perimeter College (GA)*
- ★ LaGuardia Community College (NY)*++
- ★ Paul D. Camp Community College (VA)*++
- ★ Southern University at Shreveport (LA)*++
- ★ Spokane Community College (WA)

Intentional Engagement Strategies

The Student Technology Services (STS) organization at **EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE** (TX) delivers quality computer and technology services to students, faculty, and staff — and prepares its student employees with professional and technical skills. STS, which is staffed and managed by students, has grown from four to 40 students since it began in April 2002.

STS also has sent students to provide support for the technology staff of the El Paso Independent School District and Autotronic Control Corporation, and EPCC has hired a number of the STS employees to fill positions at the college.

Through its Learning Success Services (LSS) area, **COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER** (CO) provides tutoring services in math, English, reading, and English as a Second Language. In 2004, CCD tutoring labs provided about 199,000 contact hours with students. During the spring semester, nearly 7,000 students accessed services in one of the three LSS areas. LSS director Ken Swiney says, “One student told me he wouldn’t have passed Math 030 without the tutor he had over the summer. He had taken the class twice before without passing it.”

Reaching for Excellence: Academic Challenge

THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES were among the top performers within their size category on the academic challenge benchmark. This list, presented in alphabetical order without regard to size, also indicates colleges that serve high proportions of minority, first-generation, and academically underprepared students.

- ★ El Paso Community College (TX)*++
- ★ LaGuardia Community College (NY)*++
- ★ Mercy College of Health Sciences (IA)
- ★ Sinclair Community College (OH)†
- ★ Southern University at Shreveport (LA)*++
- ★ Spokane Community College (WA)
- ★ Tacoma Community College (WA)†
- ★ Wilbur Wright College (IL)*++

Intentional Engagement Strategies

The Electronic Portfolio initiative at **LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE** (NY) provides students with a tool for collecting their academic work and their reflections on their learning as well as for sharing their portfolios on the Internet.

Students begin posting work to their ePortfolios during their first year and refine their presentations as they move forward, continually reflecting on the process of growth and improvement.

On *CCSSE* questions related to the academic challenge benchmark, students who developed ePortfolios report “working harder than they thought they could,” “synthesizing and organizing ideas in new ways,” and “making judgments about the value or soundness of information” more frequently than the LaGuardia average.

At **TACOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE** (WA), nursing students are well prepared to care for future patients because of their training through concept mapping, a technique in which students create a visual map of connections in order to understand the relationships among ideas and create a plan of care. A concept map shows patient problems and how they are interrelated based on their admitting diagnoses, patient assessments, diagnostic test results, interventions, and treatments. This type of training encourages students to understand the concepts and connec-

tions of nursing care rather than memorize disconnected data.

In fall 2001, **WILBUR WRIGHT COLLEGE** (IL) began an ongoing collegewide conversation among faculty (including adjuncts), students, staff, and administration focused not only on what teachers do in the classroom to produce learning, but also on what students do to demonstrate that learning. All course syllabi now have explicit student learning outcomes linked to the college’s general education goals. In addition, interdisciplinary peer advisory panels consult with departments to help develop assignments that demonstrate learning across the general education core — for example, the types of assignments an English teacher might make to allow students to demonstrate quantitative literacy or the types of oral presentation assignments that are possible in a math class.

At **MERCY COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES** (IA), students in the Introduction to Research course complete a research proposal during the semester related to a problem or concern of interest to them. This assignment includes proposing a design for their study, identifying target and accessible populations, and determining the eligibility criteria for subjects. In addition, they select an appropriate instrument for their study or develop a data collection tool of their own. Finally, students identify the statistical procedure that will be used to analyze results.

Although the students do not actually conduct a full research study, they develop an understanding of the research process. Students present research proposals to their peers with the use of PowerPoint slides, further developing their communication skills.

Reaching for Excellence: Student-Faculty Interaction

THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES were among the top performers within their size category on the student-faculty interaction benchmark. This list, presented in alphabetical order without regard to size, also indicates colleges that serve high proportions of minority, first-generation, and academically underprepared students.

- ★ Austin Community College (TX)*
- ★ Dona Ana Branch Community College — NMSU (NM)*+†
- ★ Gainesville College (GA)
- ★ Guilford Technical Community College (NC)*†
- ★ Parkland College (IL)
- ★ North Harris Montgomery Community College District (TX)*†
- ★ Northwest Indian College (WA)*+†
- ★ The Community and Technical College at WVU Tech (WV)+

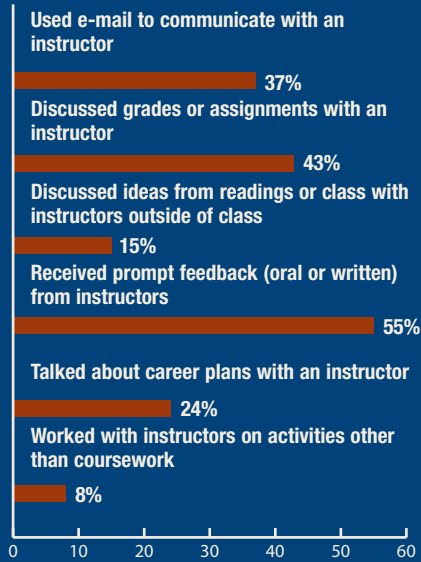
* denotes **minority-serving institutions** (at least 25% of students are black, Hispanic, or Native American).

+ denotes institutions that serve high proportions of **first-generation students** (at least 37% of students — the median for colleges included in the 2005 *CCSSE* benchmarks — are first-generation).

† denotes institutions that serve high proportions of **academically underprepared students** (at least 53% of students — the median for colleges included in the 2005 *CCSSE* benchmarks — need developmental education in at least one area).

Key Findings for Student-Faculty Interaction

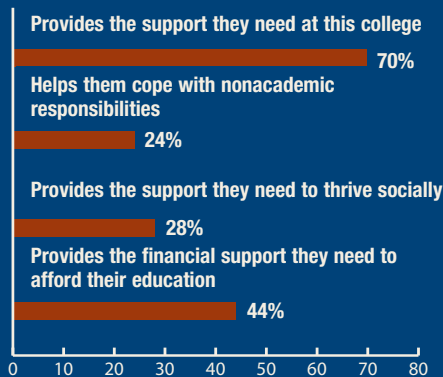
Students who often or very often ...



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Key Findings for Support for Learners

Students who report that their college “quite a bit” or “very much” ...



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Intentional Engagement Strategies

In 2002, NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE (WA), with grant support from the National Science Foundation, began the First Year Experience (FYE) program to increase student completion of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses. The program integrates science, communication, Native history, and writing courses; it also has an explicit strategy of forming student-faculty partnerships.

In fall 2004, Jessie U. entered NWIC without a major. During the next three quarters, she was involved in the FYE program. In her composition class, she wrote about plants; in oral communication she argued fishing rights; in history she studied geology. She also became involved in campus clubs, possibly because all FYE instructors advise campus organizations as part of their commitment. With faculty support, Jessie successfully completed a research internship in Alaska with the Environmental Protection Agency in summer 2005. Her goal now is to concentrate her studies on environmental sciences. Jessie’s story is typical of FYE students. Since the program began, all new full-time students have participated in the program, with approximately 25–30 completing summer internships. Indicators such as retention, course completion, and grade point average have shown substantial improvement.

To enhance student-faculty interaction outside the classroom, THE COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE AT WVU TECH (WV) took a close look at its student organizations. Recognizing the on-campus benefit as well as the employment connections that these organizations provide, the college set an expectation that each technical program area would have a student organization.

As student organizations were formed in other areas, participants helped design and build student lounges, participated in Earth Day activities, served as judges for competitions, assisted high school teachers with robotics contests, and accompanied faculty on recruiting trips. With the growing number of adult students, a NonTraditional Student Organization was formed; Phi Theta Kappa, the honor society of two-year colleges, was reactivated. Partially as a result of these efforts, the college produced the highest retention and graduation rates of all community colleges in the state.

PARKLAND COLLEGE (IL) recognizes that communication is critical. Faculty members are using technology to find new ways to connect with students. Quite naturally, with the development of online learning at the college, faculty and student interaction through e-mail is increasing. Many faculty, including both online and on-campus instructors, e-mail their students before classes begin and each week of the course, providing supplemental course information and soliciting feedback.

* denotes **minority-serving institutions** (at least 25% of students are black, Hispanic, or Native American).

+ denotes institutions that serve high proportions of **first-generation students** (at least 37% of students — the median for colleges included in the 2005 CCSSE benchmarks — are first-generation).

† denotes institutions that serve high proportions of **academically underprepared students** (at least 53% of students — the median for colleges included in the 2005 CCSSE benchmarks — need developmental education in at least one area).

GAINESVILLE COLLEGE (GA) emphasizes the importance of integrating technology into the fabric of the institution to enhance student success and development. Having designated electronic mail as the official means of communication, the college creates e-mail groups for class correspondence and provides easy-to-use electronic tools, including electronic bulletin boards and shared class folders, to facilitate advisor-student interaction.

Almost all classrooms at GC are “smart classrooms” that create opportunities for interaction and learning by integrating computer, multimedia, audio-visual, and network technologies in all academic disciplines.

Reaching for Excellence: Support for Learners

THE FOLLOWING COLLEGES were among the top performers within their size category on the support for learners benchmark. This list, presented in alphabetical order without regard to size, also indicates colleges that serve high proportions of minority, first-generation, and academically underprepared students.

- ★ El Centro College (TX)*++
- ★ El Paso Community College (TX)*++
- ★ LaGuardia Community College (NY)*++
- ★ Louisiana Delta Community College (LA)*+
- ★ Pueblo Community College (CO)*++
- ★ St. Philip’s College (TX)*++
- ★ Sinclair Community College (OH)†
- ★ Southern University at Shreveport (LA)*++

Intentional Engagement Strategies

In 2003, **ST. PHILIP’S COLLEGE** (TX) established the Advisors in Residence (AIR) program, placing full-time academic advisors across the college to help students with their class schedules, degree plans, referrals from faculty, and preparations for graduation. These advisors also encourage students and guide them to support services.

Data suggest that there is a positive relationship between the advisor and student contacts and increased student retention and graduation. For the seven departments using AIR for the past two and a half years, the number of graduates increased dramatically. In 2002–2003 through 2004–2005, the number of associate degrees and certificates awarded increased by 68%. In contrast, the number of graduates in the 10 departments without full-time advisors grew at a rate of 28%.

At **SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE** (OH), new students develop an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) based on risk criteria. Counselors assist the students with career selection, a plan to pay for educational expenses, and strategies to improve learning and study skills. Students also receive intervention services through early alerts.

From July 2003 through June 2005, a total of 5,135 students were served. The ILP students had consistently higher retention rates than non-ILP students *and* all first-time degree-seeking students. ILP students who have multiple risk factors compared favorably to the

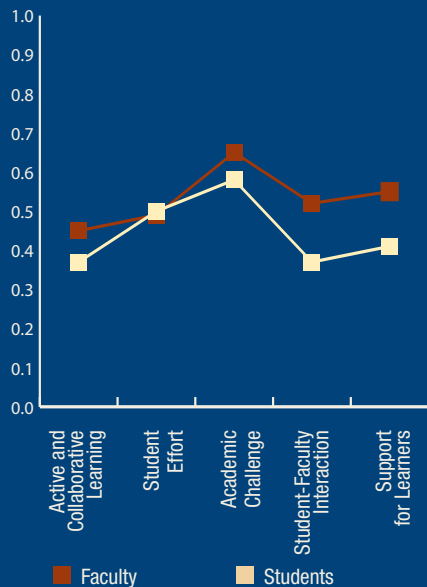
average of all students in terms of grade point average and successful course completion. Participants reported that ILP helped them overcome obstacles. Finally, *there was no significant difference in 2005 between minority (predominantly African American) and nonminority student persistence for all new full-time students.*

To support student learning, **PUEBLO COMMUNITY COLLEGE** (CO) integrated four Education Advocates (EAs) into the college’s advising model. The EAs act as liaisons between the students and their instructors; provide academic, career, and personal guidance; and direct students to on- and off-campus resources. Pueblo also has student mentors who contact students to schedule advising appointments, remind them of deadlines, and tell them about campus activities. Faculty members use an electronic early alert system to refer students to EAs for intervention.

At **EL CENTRO COLLEGE** (TX), all math classes are taught with an online component, which allows students to complete assignments and quizzes, use tutorials, and check their grades. Faculty members also developed a math CD that provides help with developmental math as well as a range of resources.

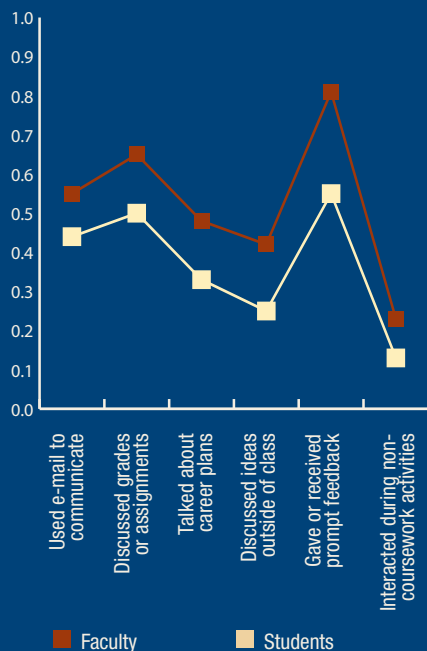
In addition, full-time mathematics faculty members provide adjunct faculty training twice per year.

Effective Educational Practice: Student and Faculty Responses



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

Student-Faculty Interaction: Student Experiences/Faculty Perceptions



Source: CCSSE 2005 data.

CCFSSE: A First Look

Through the Eyes of Faculty Members

The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), which is aligned with CCSSE, elicits information from faculty about their teaching practices, the ways they spend their professional time both in and out of class, and their perceptions regarding students' educational experiences. In 2005, 3,561 faculty members from 39 colleges participated in the first national administration of the survey.

All institutions that participated in the 2005 CCSSE survey were invited to participate in CCFSSE, which was administered via the Web. At colleges that chose to participate, every faculty member teaching credit classes was invited to respond to the survey, and faculty respondents generally mirror the national two-year college faculty population. The notable exception is employment status: Nationally, 33% of two-year college faculty members are employed full-time, while 59% of CCFSSE respondents are employed full-time.

CCFSSE responses enable participating institutions to note areas of strength, identify challenges for further considera-

tion, and target areas of focus for faculty development. As an exercise that can yield intriguing results, colleges may contrast faculty perceptions with student responses, although it is important to note that these comparisons are not always equivalent. Students report their experiences throughout the current academic year, while faculty members are asked to describe their practices in a specific, selected course and also to indicate their perceptions of student experiences in the college more generally. Nonetheless, the student and faculty responses provide a useful prompt for discussion, particularly where faculty and students have differing perceptions.

In the Eye of the Beholder

Overall, faculty members perceive higher levels of student engagement than students report. This divergence is not unexpected; in part, it shows the difference between personal data (what each person personally observes and experiences) and systematically collected data, which show what *typically* is happening to students on campus. For example, an instructor might talk with five or six students after each class and personally experience a high level of student-faculty interaction. But if generally it is *the same* five or six students that linger after each

CCFSSE data are based on results from 39 colleges. When student (CCSSE) and faculty (CCFSSE) views are presented side-by-side in this report, the student responses include data only from colleges that participated in the faculty survey. It also is important to note that while CCSSE results are expressed in terms of benchmarks, which are created through a complex statistical analysis and peer review, there are no benchmarks for CCFSSE. For this report, CCFSSE results are presented in groupings of survey items that correspond to the CCSSE benchmarks.

class, then the instructor is interacting with only a fraction of his or her students.

With regard to **active and collaborative learning** items, faculty members report that students are asking more questions in class, collaborating more with others inside and outside of class, and working on community-based projects more than students report actually doing any of these activities.

Faculty also consistently report higher levels of **student-faculty interaction**, which research indicates is critical to student retention. For example:

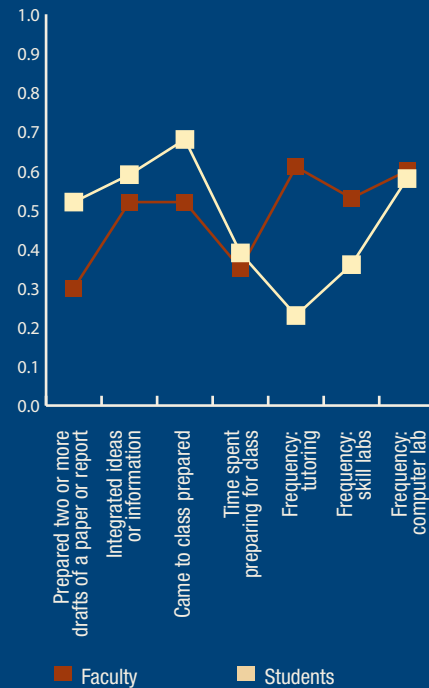
- ★ 93% of faculty members report giving **prompt feedback** (oral or written) to students often or very often vs. 55% of students who report receiving such feedback often or very often.
- ★ 38% of faculty say they **discuss career plans** with students often or very often vs. 22% of students who report having such conversations with faculty.
- ★ 29% of faculty say they **discuss ideas from readings or classes** with students outside of class vs. 15% of students who report having such interactions.

While faculty members' overall perceptions of **student effort** are similar to those of students, faculty members report significantly lower levels of engagement in several areas:

- ★ 35% of faculty vs. 15% of students report that the students often or very often **come to class unprepared**.
- ★ 16% of faculty vs. 7% of students report that the students often or very often **skip class**.
- ★ 22% of faculty vs. 50% of students say the students often or very often prepare **multiple drafts of a paper** before turning it in.

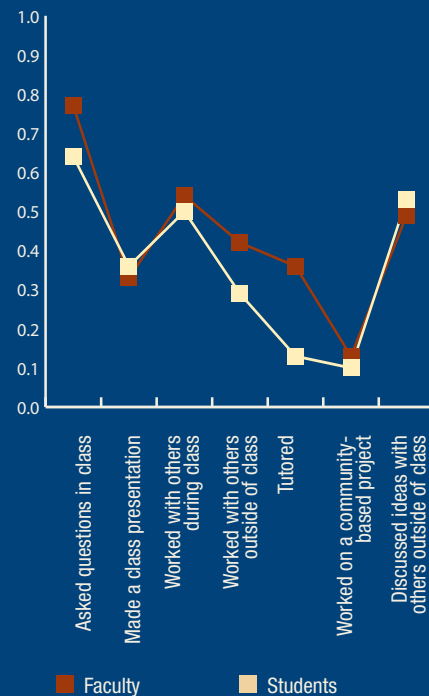
In fact, faculty members report different levels of student engagement only in three areas of the student effort benchmark: students' use of tutoring, skill labs, and computer lab. This difference, however, likely is because *CCFSSE* asks faculty members how often they *refer* students to such services, while *CCSSE* asks students how often they *use* the services.

Student Effort: Student Experiences/Faculty Perceptions



Source: *CCSSE* 2005 data.

Active and Collaborative Learning: Student and Faculty Responses



Source: *CCSSE* 2005 data.

Note: Three items were excluded from these data. A *CCSSE* survey item about the number of books students read on their own can't be asked on the faculty survey. Items about the number of books read and papers assigned for classes were omitted from the comparison because students report on those activities for the full year, while faculty report on those activities for their particular class.

To create these charts of student and faculty views, responses to *CCSSE* and *CCFSSE* items were rescaled. All scores were converted to proportions of their totals so that the low end of the scale was always zero and the high end was always one. For example, a four on a seven-point scale and a three on a five-point scale both equal 0.5. Don't Know/Not Applicable responses on items measuring frequency of use were not included in the computation of these scores.

Making the Most of All Faculty Members' Time

Both full-time and part-time faculty members must make the most of the time they spend with students. Given the number of both part-time students and part-time instructors, students' and faculty members' shared experiences — and their opportunities for engagement — occur primarily in the classroom. The CCFSSSE responses show that:

- ★ Three-quarters (75%) of full-time faculty and 9% of part-time faculty consider academic advising part of their teaching role.
- ★ 80% of part-time faculty and 47% of full-time faculty spend zero hours per week working with students on activities other than coursework.
- ★ Only 12% of part-time faculty and less than one-quarter (23%) of full-time faculty often incorporate academic advising into their course sections.
- ★ Only 10% of all faculty consider linked courses, 9% consider learning communities, and 8% consider service learning part of their teaching role. In all cases, a greater number of full-time faculty than part-time faculty are employing these practices.

In addition to these findings about teaching roles and practices, the data reflect important realities about faculty demographics — that is, 85% of faculty respondents are white, and 64% of the CCFSSSE respondents at CCFSSSE colleges are white. Also, more than half of CCFSSSE respondents (52%) are at least 50 years old.

Reflections on Results

Academic advising and career counseling — engagement efforts that encourage students to set and meet goals — can have a significant effect on student retention and success. Even though 89% of CCFSSSE student respondents cite academic advising/planning as “somewhat” or “very” important, 35% report that they rarely or never use these services. Half of students (50%) say they rarely or never use career counseling services. Instructors who build these activities into their class requirements therefore have the potential to reach students who otherwise would not be getting this counseling.

Several instructional strategies, such as learning communities and service learning, are powerful strategies for student engagement. Relatively small numbers of faculty members currently report using these innovative practices,

but their use is expected to grow in coming years. Certainly, there are opportunities for professional development in this area.

Finally, the demographics of faculty members also suggest a particular focus for professional development. In some cases, faculty may benefit from better understanding the dynamics created by the racial differences between instructors and students. The average age of community college faculty is noteworthy because many faculty members are approaching retirement age. National data indicate that more than half (56%) of full-time community college faculty and 47% of part-time community college faculty are expected to retire in the next 10 to 15 years.* This level of turnover will require resources for new faculty orientation and professional development, but it also allows colleges to establish new expectations for faculty to actively engage students both in and outside the classroom.

*NCES, *National Study of Postsecondary Faculty: 2004*.

“No faculty member intentionally goes into a classroom not wanting to engage his or her students, but sometimes there seems to be a disconnect between the faculty and student experiences in the classroom, as if the two aren’t entirely on the same page. The CCFSSSE lets us see where some of these disconnects are.”

WENDY LINGO

Counselor

*Kirkwood Community College (IA)
CCFSSSE participant, 2001, 2003, 2005*

Overview of 2005 *CCSSE* Respondents

THE 2005 *CCSSE* SURVEY WAS administered in spring 2005 during class sessions at *CCSSE* member colleges. An overview of the participating colleges and their students follows. Details about the member colleges, student respondents, and the survey sampling and administration process are available at www.ccsse.org.

- ★ A total of 133,281 students from 257 institutions in 38 states are included in the 2005 *CCSSE* national sample.
- ★ 2005 *CCSSE* member colleges enroll a total of 1,308,928 credit students, or about 21% of the total credit-student population in the nation's community colleges.
- ★ Overall, *CCSSE*'s survey respondents in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 represent a total credit enrollment of 2,360,316 students across 404 *CCSSE* member colleges in 43 states. *CCSSE*'s entire college membership over the same period represents approximately 36% of the nation's community colleges (1,113 regionally accredited, public associate-degree-granting institutions) and 37% of their 6,318,779 credit students.
- ★ Of the 257 colleges participating in 2005, 58% are classified as small (up to 4,499 students), 24% as medium (4,500–7,999 students), 11% as large (8,000–14,999 students), and 7% as extra large (15,000 or more students). Nationally, 58% of community colleges are small, 20% are medium, 14% are large, and 8% are extra large.
- ★ Colleges reported their locations as 28% urban, 23% suburban, and 49% rural. Fall 2003 IPEDS data indicate that among all U.S. community colleges, 39% are urban, 24% are suburban, and 37% are rural.
- ★ Students who responded to the survey generally reflect the underlying student population of the participating colleges in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity. Part-time students, however, were underrepresented in the *CCSSE* sample because classes are sampled rather than individual students. (About 31% of *CCSSE* respondents are enrolled part-time, and 69% are enrolled full-time. IPEDS shows that the national figures are 60% part-time and 40% full-time.) To address this discrepancy, *CCSSE* results are weighted by part-time and full-time status to reflect the institutions' actual proportions of part- and full-time students.

- ★ Of the survey respondents, 61% were female and 39% were male. These figures are similar to the national community college student ratio, which is 59% female and 41% male.
- ★ 2005 *CCSSE* student respondents range in age from 18 to 65+ years old.
- ★ With respect to race/ethnicity, 2005 *CCSSE* respondents and the national community college population may be compared as follows:

<i>Race/ethnicity</i>	<i>CCSSE respondents</i>	<i>National percentages</i>
White	68%	65%
Latino/Hispanic	8%	11%
Black	12%	14%
International*	5%	2%
Asian	2%	4%
Native American	2%	1%
Other	3%	3%

*International students are not citizens or nationals of the United States and are in the country on a visa or temporary basis.

Sources: *CCSSE* 2005 data and IPEDS, Fall 2003.

Noteworthy Facts about 2005 Participating Colleges

- ★ The 2005 membership includes fourteen consortia: a consortium of small Texas colleges (nine colleges); the Hispanic Serving Institutions/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Schools consortium (16 colleges); the Achieving the Dream consortium (14 colleges in four states); and member colleges from Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, North Dakota, Northeast Minnesota, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.
- ★ All or most of the public community colleges in five states — Indiana, Louisiana, North Dakota, Virginia, and West Virginia — participated in the 2005 *CCSSE* survey.
- ★ In addition, at least 30% of the total statewide community college student population in Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Rhode Island, and Texas are represented in 2005.

CCSSE National Advisory Board

PETER EWELL, CHAIR

Vice President

National Center for Higher Education
Management Systems

DAVID ARMSTRONG

Chancellor

Florida Community Colleges and Workforce
Education

GEORGE BOGGS

President and CEO

American Association of Community Colleges

WALTER G. BUMPHUS

President

Louisiana Community & Technical College System

RUSSELL EDGERTON

Director

The Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning

JONI E. FINNEY

Vice President

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher
Education

GEORGE GRAINGER

Grant Officer

Houston Endowment, Inc.

ZELEMA HARRIS

President

Parkland College (IL)

CHRISTINE JOHNSON

President

Community College of Denver (CO)

GEORGE KUH

Chancellor's Professor and Director

National Survey of Student Engagement
Indiana University

WILLIAM LAW

President

Tallahassee Community College (FL)

HOMERO LOPEZ

President

Estrella Mountain Community College (AZ)

BYRON MCCLENNEY

Program Director and Adjunct Professor

Achieving the Dream
The University of Texas at Austin

ALEXANDER MCCORMICK

Senior Scholar

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of
Teaching

MARK MILLIRON

Executive Director, Education Practice

SAS Institute, Inc.

MICHAEL NETTLES

Executive Director

Center for Policy Studies and Research
Educational Testing Service

MICHAEL POINDEXTER

Vice President for Student Affairs

Community College of Rhode Island

MARGOT PEREZ-GREENE

Director, NISOD

The University of Texas at Austin

JOHN E. ROUCHE

Sid W. Richardson Regents Chair and Director

Community College Leadership Program
The University of Texas at Austin

CCSSE Staff

KAY M. McCLENNEY, PH.D.
Director

ALICIA BETSINGER, PH.D.
Survey Operations Coordinator

JEFF CRUMPLEY
Senior Research Associate

C. NATHAN MARTI, PH.D.
Senior Research Associate

CHRISTINE McLEAN
College Relations Coordinator

COURTNEY ADKINS, PH.D.
College Liaison

CHRIS COSART
Research Associate

ARLEEN ARNSPARGER
Manager, MetLife Foundation Initiative

LIN TAO
Graduate Research Assistant

SARAH SUPULSKI
Senior Administrative Associate

KATHY A. THATCHER
Senior Administrative Associate

PAT DIDNER
Administrative Assistant

ROWLAND CADENA
Project Associate

ADRIENNE SNEED
Senior Office Assistant

LAUREL ROW
Senior Office Assistant

JOSEPH CALLIHAM
Office Assistant

CCSSE MEMBER COLLEGES 2005

For a list of CCSSE member colleges, visit www.ccsse.org.



COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

1 UNIVERSITY STATION D5600 | AUSTIN, TEXAS 78712-0378
T: 512.471.6807 | F: 512.471.4209 | E: INFO@CCSSE.ORG | WWW.CCSSE.ORG