

## Working With Your *DESSE* Data

### BUILDING A DATA NARRATIVE

#### 1 Identifying a Data Focus Area

- » Examine the survey results by focus areas in the *DESSE* All-Student Frequency Report.
  - ▶ NOTE: Please see the [Appendix on pages 5–8](#) for focus areas and corresponding survey items.
- » What focus area or focus areas have particular pertinence to the college's work with its dual enrollment population? *Note that what you select might overlap with other areas of focus; therefore, it might be useful to review data from multiple focus areas to deepen your understanding of the survey results.* What specific findings in these focus areas point to potential new priorities for college action?
- » For the various breakout findings (grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity) within these focus areas, what captures your attention/concern? Where do the data demonstrate that different groups of students are having very different experiences?

#### 2 Sharing the Data

In Step One, you identified a data focus area or multiple data focus areas. The data narrative approach described in the following paragraphs will help frame the discussion with others about the data focus area(s).

Sharing data in a meaningful way—a way that promotes positive change—can be a challenge, especially when the dataset is large and the audience diverse. A data narrative approach encourages deeper, more meaningful data-driven conversations. This approach uses data to tell a story—a story that develops and takes shape as data are shared and discussed.

The data narrative exercise is designed to be conducted in small groups, followed by a facilitated discussion with the larger group. During each session, groups are presented with a series of simply stated, related data points, with each data point being shared one at a time. After each data point is revealed, groups spend time discussing what the data point means to them in terms of their own work at the college. As group members talk about the meaning behind the data, a storyline develops, making the data more relevant and more relatable.

#### Selecting Key Data Points:

Each data point should build on the previous one, enabling the group to develop a clearer understanding of the issue and to formulate meaning around the issue, making the discussion more salient and tangible.

If, for example, a strategic goal of the college is to ensure that your dually enrolled students are receiving and benefitting from comprehensive advising services, you will likely want to select data points that highlight advising specifically (e.g., Item #13, Item #30a, Item #31a, and Item #32a).

Or, if the session's focus is about barriers to persistence for dually enrolled students, and the data show that transportation makes it difficult for a quarter of your students to take dual enrollment classes, you might also want to explore the others barriers outlined in Item #34. You may also want to look at these data broken out by student characteristics such as grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity. Considered individually, these data points should be meaningful, but should be even more compelling when considered in conjunction with other relevant data.



## Presenting the Data:

The data narrative exercise is conducted first in small groups. After the audience has been split into small groups, the data are presented. The objective is to share each data point one at a time and to allow discussion after each data point is revealed.

### EXAMPLE DATA SET #1 // BARRIERS TO PERSISTENCE

**1st data point:** *Twenty-five percent of our dually enrolled student respondents reported that transportation issues made it difficult for them to take courses. Forty percent of our dually enrolled students reported that cost made it difficult for them to take courses.*

- ▶ Groups should discuss the implications of these data. What do they mean? What questions do they raise?

**2nd data point:** *Only 15% of our dually enrolled students have discussed basic needs assistance such as transportation and only 25% have discussed financial assistance for dual enrollment courses (help paying for dual enrollment courses, supplies, and books) with someone who works at our college.*

- ▶ Groups should discuss how these data points inform the first one. What additional questions do these data points raise?

**3rd data point:** *Our 9th and 10th grade students were more likely to report that transportation is a barrier to persistence for them than were our older students. There is not much difference by grade level, gender, or race/ethnicity among the students who said that cost is a barrier for them.*

- ▶ Groups should discuss how these data points inform the first two. What new dimensions does this information bring to the data narrative? What are the implications now?

## EXAMPLE DATA SET #2 // ACADEMIC CHALLENGE/USE OF SUPPORT SERVICES

**1st data point:** *Forty percent of our dual enrollment students said they have struggled in the dual enrollment classes they are taking.*

- ▶ Groups should discuss the implications of this data point. What does it mean? What questions does it raise?

**2nd data point:** *While half of our dual enrollment student respondents said they met with an advisor, only 15% said they discussed with an advisor how college courses differ from high school courses.*

- ▶ Groups should discuss how this data point informs the first one. What additional questions does this data point raise?

**3rd data point:** *Sixty-five percent of our dual enrollment respondents said they were aware of tutoring services. But 75% of students reported never using them.*

- ▶ Groups should discuss how this data point informs the first two. What new dimensions does this information bring to the data narrative? What are the implications now?

### Large Group Discussion:



After small groups have had time to discuss the data and formulate a clearer understanding of the issues, each group should share their thoughts — their version of the “story.” The objective is to meld each group’s story into a larger discussion on the topic. Some stories may align, while others may challenge the group to take an even closer look at the issue. The data narrative exercise is designed to encourage discussion among diverse audiences about specific issues of focus for the college. This tool, while designed for sharing results with a larger group, can be adapted for data sharing among specific areas of campus—within academic departments, student services units, student groups, etc.

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## Next Steps

- » **Priority Focus Area:** What is the data focus area(s) your college has selected?
  
- » **Strategies:** Identify three strategies that will improve results in this area.
  
- » **Key Players:** Who are the key players who will need to be involved to implement these strategies?
  
- » **Resources:** What college resources (time, people, facilities, money, etc.) will need to be allocated/reallocated to implement these strategies?
  
- » **Challenges:** What are some challenges that may prevent progress in implementing these strategies?
  
- » **Measure Improvement:** How will you measure improvement in the focus area(s) other than administering the *DESSE* again in spring 2024?

# Appendix

NOTE: In order to easily locate the data associated with the items in the focus area you've selected, you can highlight, right click, and copy the bolded key phrase in the item text you're interested in from this tool. On the frequency report you are reviewing, you can press Ctrl + F and paste the copied text into the search box that appears on your screen. This should take you to the survey item and associated data on the frequency report.

Example <i>DESSE</i> Focus Areas	
Focus Area	<i>DESSE</i> Items
Academic Advising and Planning	<p>13) In the past year, how many times have you <b>interacted with an advisor/counselor</b> from this college</p> <p>30) Are you <b>aware of the following services</b> at this college?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Academic advising/counseling</p> <p>31a) During the past year, how <b>often have you used academic advising</b> and planning services?</p> <p>32a) How <b>satisfied have you been with your use of academic advising</b> and planning services during the last year?</p>
Academic Challenge	<p>26) Do the instructors of the dual enrollment classes you are taking right now expect more, about the same, or less <b>than the instructors of the high school</b> classes you have taken?</p> <p>27) Are the assignments in the dual enrollment classes you are taking right now more challenging, about the same, or less challenging <b>than the assignments in the high school</b> classes you have taken?</p> <p>29) Have you <b>struggled in the dual enrollment classes</b> you are currently taking?</p>
Active and Collaborative Learning	<p>20) Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now through this college, about how often have you done each of the following?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. <b>Asked questions in class</b> or contributed to class discussions</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. <b>Worked with other students on projects</b> during class</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">d. <b>Worked with classmates outside of class</b> to prepare class assignments</p>
Barriers to Persistence	<p>19) For any dual enrollment courses that you take in person through this college, what best describes <b>how you typically get to campus</b>?</p> <p>33) Which of the following have you <b>discussed with someone through this college</b>?</p> <p>34) Which of the following <b>make it difficult to take</b> dual enrollment courses?</p>
Course Taking	<p>12) Did you <b>have any choice</b> about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now? How much did each of the following <b>help you determine</b> the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a1. Someone who works for this college</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a2. Someone who works for your high school</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a3. Friends</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a4. Family members</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a5. College website</p> <p>14) In which of the following <b>subject areas have you taken</b> or are you currently taking dual enrollment courses?</p> <p>15) How many of the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now are taught in person at your high school <b>by a high school teacher</b>?</p>

Example <i>DESSE</i> Focus Areas	
Focus Area	<i>DESSE</i> Items
Course Taking <i>(continued)</i>	<p>16) How many of the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now are taught in person at your high school <b>by a college instructor</b>?</p> <p>17) How many of the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now are taught <b>in person at the college</b>?</p> <p>18) How many of the dual enrollment courses you are <b>taking right now are taught online</b>?</p> <p>35) How do you <b>prefer to take your dual enrollment</b> courses?</p>
Getting Started	<p>7) How much did each of the following <b>help you learn about the opportunity</b> to take dual enrollment courses?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone who works for this college</li> <li>Someone who works for your high school</li> <li>Friends</li> <li>Family members</li> <li>College website</li> <li>Did any other source help you learn about dual enrollment courses?</li> </ol> <p>8) Who <b>most encouraged you to start</b> taking dual enrollment courses?</p> <p>9) Indicate which of the following are <b>your goals and/or reasons</b> for taking dual enrollment courses through this college.</p> <p>10) Did you <b>participate in an orientation</b> for dual enrollment courses through this college?</p> <p>11) How was <b>the process to initially sign up</b> for dual enrollment courses offered by this college?</p> <p>12) Did you <b>have any choice</b> about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now?</p> <p>How much did each of the following <b>help you determine</b> the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Someone who works for this college</li> <li>Someone who works for your high school</li> <li>Friends</li> <li>Family members</li> <li>College website</li> </ol>
Goals	<p>9) Indicate which of the following are <b>your goals and/or reasons</b> for taking dual enrollment courses through this college.</p> <p>38) What is your <b>primary goal immediately after you graduate</b> from high school?</p>
Instructor Expectations	<p>21) Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now through this college, how many of your instructors did the following?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly explained <b>class grading policies</b></li> <li>Clearly explained the <b>class attendance policy</b></li> </ol> <p>26) Do the instructors of the dual enrollment classes you are taking right now expect more, about the same, or less <b>than the instructors of the high school</b> classes you have taken?</p>
Motivation and Preparedness	<p>23) I am <b>motivated to do what it takes to succeed</b> in my dual enrollment courses.</p> <p>24) My academic background has <b>prepared me to succeed</b> in my dual enrollment courses.</p> <p>36) While in high school, have you taken <b>any of the following types of courses</b>?</p> <p>39) Has taking dual enrollment courses through this college made you <b>more or less confident</b> that you could be successful in college after high school?</p>

Example <i>DESSE</i> Focus Areas	
Focus Area	<i>DESSE</i> Items
Sense of Belonging	<p>21) Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now through this college, how many of your instructors did the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Had activities to <b>introduce students to one another</b></li> <li>e. <b>Learned your name</b></li> </ul> <p>22) I feel like <b>part of the community</b> at this college.</p>
Student Effort	<p>20) Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now through this college, about how often have you done each of the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Worked on a paper or project that required <b>integrating ideas or information</b> from various sources</li> <li>g. Worked harder than you thought you could to <b>meet an instructor's standards</b> or expectations</li> <li>h. Come to class <b>without completing readings</b> or assignments</li> <li>k. <b>Skipped class</b></li> <li>m. <b>Not turned in an assignment</b></li> </ul> <p>28) Do you spend <b>more or less time studying</b> for your dual enrollment classes than you do for your high school classes?</p>
Student-Faculty Interaction	<p>20) Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now through this college, about how often have you done each of the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. <b>Discussed grades</b> or assignments with an instructor</li> <li>f. Talked about <b>career plans</b> with an instructor</li> <li>i. <b>Communicated with an instructor</b> through the course website or email</li> <li>j. Received <b>timely feedback</b> (written or oral) from instructors on your performance</li> <li>l. <b>Asked for help</b> from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class</li> </ul> <p>21) Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now through this college, how many of your instructors did the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. <b>Learned your name</b></li> </ul> <p>25) I know <b>how to get in touch</b> with my dual enrollment instructors outside of class.</p>
Support Services	<p>13) In the past year, how many times have you <b>interacted with an advisor/counselor</b> from this college</p> <p>21) Thinking about the dual enrollment courses you are taking right now through this college, how many of your instructors did the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Clearly explained academic and <b>student support services available</b> at this college</li> </ul> <p>29) Have you <b>struggled in the dual enrollment classes</b> you are currently taking? Has someone at this college <b>contacted you when you have struggled</b> with your dual enrollment coursework to help you get the assistance you need</p> <p>30) Are you <b>aware of the following services</b> at this college?</p> <p>31a) During the past year, how <b>often have you used academic advising</b> and planning services?</p> <p>31b) During the past year, how <b>often have you used career counseling</b> services?</p> <p>31c) During the past year, how <b>often have you used tutoring</b> services?</p> <p>31d) During the past year, how <b>often have you used writing, math, or other skill lab</b> services?</p> <p>31e) During the past year, how <b>often have you used transfer credit assistance</b> services?</p> <p>31f) During the past year, how <b>often have you used services for students with disabilities</b>?</p>

Example <i>DESSE</i> Focus Areas	
Focus Area	<i>DESSE</i> Items
Support Services <i>(continued)</i>	<p>32a) How <b>satisfied have you been with your use of academic advising</b> and planning services during the last year?</p> <p>32b) How <b>satisfied have you been with your use of career counseling</b> services during the last year?</p> <p>32c) How <b>satisfied have you been with your use of tutoring</b> services during the last year?</p> <p>32d) How <b>satisfied have you been with your use of writing, math, or other skill lab</b> services during the last year?</p> <p>32e) How <b>satisfied have you been with your use of transfer credit assistance</b> services during the last year?</p> <p>32f) How <b>satisfied have you been with your use of services for students with disabilities</b> during the last year?</p> <p>33) Which of the following have you <b>discussed with someone through this college?</b></p>