

Data Brief

NEWSFLASH: DACC named LEADER COLLEGE by AtD!



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Danville Area Community College

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ACHIEVING THE DREAM (AtD) is on the move at Danville Area Community College!

This Data Brief includes excerpts from a report recently written by Patrick Bayard, Director of Grants and Planning, and Cindy Peck, Director of Admissions and Records. Let's go for a ride . . .

UPWARD TREND IN STUDENT OUTCOMES

Danville Area Community College (DACC) realized consistent and steady overall success in its initial gatekeeper courses for both English and Math. Beginning from the 2008-2009 baseline year, the three subsequent years showed increasing combined overall success rates of 60% (2009-2010), 63% (2010-2011), and 66% (2011-2012). There were no years of decline. The most notable improvement in student progression and completion has been in DACC's initial gatekeeper English 121 and 101 classes. DACC experienced an increase in student success in English 121 and 101 across each disaggregated subgroup from the baseline year to the (2011-2012) year. See chart below.

ADDRESSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

While achievement gaps remained compared to white students, the combined minority success rates for initial gatekeeper Math and English courses realized consistently declining achievement gaps. For combined minority students the success rates were raised from a baseline 45% (2008-2009) to 50% (2009-2010), 58% (2010-2011), and 67% (2011-2012). Compared to white students, which also saw a steady increase from a baseline 59% (2008-2009) to 62% (2009-2010), 67% (2010-2011), and 70% (2011-2012), the achievement gap decreased for each year. Starting from the baseline year, each year saw persistent declines in the performance comparisons of minorities and white students from 14% (2008-2009) to 12% (2009-2010), 9% (2010-2011), and 3% (2011-2012). As with the student outcomes data, the difference in the achievement gaps showed significant improvement specifically in the gatekeeper English 121 and 101 course. The difference in success of African American and white students declined from a baseline differ-

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Successfully Complete Courses with a C or Better

Note: The measure is calculated as a ratio of all credit hours successfully completed to all credit hours attempted

Define the cohort**	ENGL-121, ENGL-101, and MATH-105 Students											
	2008-2009			2009-2010			2010-2011			2011-2012		
2011-2012	N	# [Successful]	% [Successful]	N	# [Successful]	% [Successful]	N	# [Successful]	% [Successful]	N	# [Successful]	% [Successful]
All	2,015	1,125	55.83%	1,653	984	59.53%	1,508	945	62.67%	1,466	972	66.30%
Asian	23	18	78.26%	10	8	80.00%	14	10	71.43%	18	16	88.89%
African American	227	90	39.65%	196	88	44.90%	190	106	55.79%	198	121	61.11%
Hispanic	53	28	52.83%	39	27	69.23%	63	36	57.14%	75	59	78.67%
Native American	2	0	0.00%	1	1	100.00%	11	8	72.73%	6	3	50.00%
White	1,589	943	59.35%	1,114	690	61.94%	969	650	67.08%	985	690	70.05%
Other	121	46	38.02%	292	170	58.22%	261	135	51.72%	168	60	35.71%
Male	793	401	50.57%	696	418	60.06%	685	412	60.15%	603	409	67.83%
Female	1,163	697	59.93%	946	563	59.51%	814	533	65.48%	852	563	66.08%
Other	59	27	45.76%	11	3	27.27%	9	0	0.00%	7	0	0.00%
Low-Income	1,090	567	52.02%	698	353	50.57%	717	398	55.51%	734	433	58.99%
Not Low-Income	925	558	60.32%	955	626	65.55%	791	547	69.15%	732	539	73.63%



ence 28% in 2008-2009 to 18% in 2009-2010, 14% (2010-2011) and it climbed slightly to 16% (2011-2012). For Hispanic students, the difference was 7% in 2008-2009 to -2% in 2009-2010, 9% (2010-2011) and -4% (2011-2012).

The achievement gap for African Americans in the final year of the target period is being addressed with plans to strengthen African American Males Addressing Life Effectively (A-MALE) and Women Inspiring Success Effectively (WISE) support groups which target this population. While DACC's ATD Leadership team recognizes the significant strides made to closing the achievement gap — reducing it by 12% from the baseline year — the goal continues to be to eliminate the gaps altogether. For Hispanic students, the 2010-2011 declines coincide with the class size surge brought about by the nationwide economic recession that steered new students to enroll in DACC. As indicated above, it is believed that this was an outlier event that was driven by socio-economic factors. As indicated, in every other year, achievement gaps were effectively eliminated for Hispanic students compared with white students for gatekeeper English 121 and 101 courses.

INTERVENTIONS

One intervention pursued by DACC was a “Review of Policies and Procedures Related To Student Success.” The DACC ATD Core and Data team reviewed a series of policies and procedures that were in place and that were noted by faculty, staff, and students as potential barriers to student success. In alignment with a goal of improving the first year experience of students, orientation was revised and became mandatory. With this change, the number of orientation participants almost doubled from the 2011-2012 to the 2012-2013 academic year. Late registration was abolished for new students who must now register at least 10 days before classes start. The student success course, Success in College, was also re-designed and scaled to include all sections. In alignment with the changes in initial gatekeeper English courses, the English department faculty assessed the need for a change in the ENGL 101 Rhetoric I composition course. As an initial gatekeeper course, ENGL 101 was of particular interest because it is required for many programs, and one aspect of the course specifically, the Exit Exam, was identified by students, faculty, and administrators as causing several students to fail the course even though they had earned a passing grade in the class before the exam was taken. After

meticulous research of other colleges and their policies and procedures surrounding their college composition courses, the DACC Writing Faculty Committee determined that the Exit Exam should not be the only deciding factor for course competency which led to its elimination as a standalone requirement for passing the class. Students in ENGL 101 now complete a writing sample similar to the Exit Exam in their classes as part of their course requirements. Completion data from this course has shown a higher upward trend in success rates since this policy change has taken effect.

Other strategies included changes spearheaded by Phillip Langley, Lead Instructor of Developmental Education, and internal leaders trained on principles of ATD evidence-based methodology. Upon review of the data, a comprehensive strategy was developed to address performance gaps. Internal teams looked at performance data and informed by internal surveys, student, faculty, and staff feedback, and a review of high impact practices, the team was successful in: utilizing intelligent application of technology in innovative ways to support engagement; restructuring the Developmental Education Department; aligning and making strategic changes to the initial gateway English and math curriculum; and accelerating students through developmental courses and into and through gatekeeper courses.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

DACC will scale its interventions and establish a number of new efforts that collectively respond to various needs and contribute to future successes. These future goals include strengthening existing ATD systems by: implementing an automated early warning system for students needing immediate assistance; continuing to review and revise DACC's Success in College course to better meet students' needs; expanding professional development to include more front-line staff; continuing the Teaching Excellence Academy and Part-Time Faculty Academy professional development opportunities; creating a survey to identify tutoring needs as a strategy to close achievement gaps; expanding and relocating the college's Writing Center which will offer a significant resource for students seeking assistance with writing; expanding a tutoring program for underachieving students; and convening a task force to review the college's advising system which was identified by internal surveys as the most significant barrier to student success.