How Community Colleges Organize for Student Success: Gathering the National Data

Presented by:
Don Hossler, Indiana University
Mary Ziskin, Indiana University
Scott Andrew Schulz, University of Southern California
The Study of Community College Structures for Student Success (SCCSSS)

- National survey of community college structures and policies that enhance student persistence, transfer and completion

- Grew out of an ongoing study of four-year institutions (Hossler et al., 2009)

- Focused on the multiple roles and current and emerging research on community college student outcomes

American Association of Community Colleges
Annual Convention, April 9-12, 2011, New Orleans
Questions driving this project

How can research provide actionable implications for community college leaders to help with efforts to increase student persistence, transfer and completion?

Research Questions:
- What organizational structures and policies can be shown to improve student persistence, transfer and completion?
- How do community colleges organize to support student success? What structures and policies do community colleges currently use?
SCCSSS Survey Overview

- Sample: Administrators most closely involved with retention efforts
  - Identified through professional lists and the college president for each college
- Web survey will be administered in winter and spring 2011
- Questions focus on
  - Policies and organizational structures
  - Resources allocated to student success efforts
  - Key policy lever areas:
    - Financial Aid
    - Advising
    - Academic support
    - Developmental Education
    - Student services
Survey Design Process

• Focus Groups with community college leaders and practitioners
  • How student success is defined
  • How student success efforts are organized
  • Topics, programs or policies that are particularly of interest, “hot” or sensitive

• Analysis and review of research findings and practice oriented literature

• Creation and revision of the conceptual framework and list of key constructs
## Codes and Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Construct</th>
<th>Sub-Code</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional strategies, acknowledgement, recognition</strong></td>
<td>Characteristics of learner-centered colleges</td>
<td>Boswell (2004);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Characteristics of successful colleges</td>
<td>Bailey &amp; Alfonso (2005); Jenkins (2006, 2009);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data usage</td>
<td>Bailey &amp; Alfonso (2005); Boswell (2004); Jenkins (2006, 2009);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational improvement strategies</td>
<td>Boswell (2004);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Functions of student support services</td>
<td>Purnell (2004);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding policies</td>
<td>Boswell (2004); Liebowitz (2004);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional improvement strategies</td>
<td>Bailey &amp; Alfonso (2005); Boswell (2004); Jenkins (2006, 2009);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Res findings: successful interventions</td>
<td>Brock (2006);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Res findings: top retention strategies</td>
<td>Bailey &amp; Alfonso (2005); Brock &amp; LeBlanc (2005); Noel-Levitz (2007);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recom: designate an individual</td>
<td>Habley &amp; McClanahan (2004);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Res findings: retention committee</td>
<td>Noel-Levitz (2007); Jenkins (2006);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Res findings: written retention plan</td>
<td>Noel-Levitz (2007);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conceptual Framework

Foundational Leadership Philosophy, Policies & Practices
- Supporting Institutional Leadership & Intensity of Effort (Hossler, 2005, 2009; CCSSE, 2007)
- Cultivating Positive Institutional Climate for Diversity (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005; Achieving the Dream)
- Fostering a Culture of Evidence (Achieving the Dream, CCSSE, 2007, Bailey & Alfonso, 2005)

Adapted Policy Levers
- Facilitating Access to Financial Aid (Braxton, Hirschy, McClendon, 2004)
- Excellence & Coordination in Student Support Services (Braxton, Hirschy, McClendon, 2004; Purnell & Blank, 2004)
- Cultivating Opportunities & Environment for Connections in Academic Contexts (Braxton, Hirschy, McClendon, 2004)
- Curricular Structure, Organization & Focus (Calcagno, 2006; Matus-Grossman, 2002; Moore, Shulock, & Offenstein, 2009)

How Community Colleges Organize to Support Student Success

American Association of Community Colleges
Annual Convention, April 9-12, 2011, New Orleans
Survey Examples

- I. Fostering a Culture of Evidence (construct category)
- II. Constructs
  - a. Frequency (or regularity) of analyses, pertaining to completion and persistence rates in college-level course
    - i. Operationalized survey item (using a five point Likert scale): In the past several years, how often has your institution analyzed each of the following student outcomes for students enrolled in college-level courses?
      - 1. Semester-to-semester student retention rates
      - 2. Fall-to-fall student retention rates
      - 3. Transfer rates to four-year institutions
      - 4. Degree or certificate completion rates
Survey Examples

I. Developing Excellence and Coordination in Student Support Services (construct category)

II. Constructs

a. Presence of a policy requiring new students to participate in the orientation program
   i. Operationalized survey item (Y/N): Is participation in the orientation program required for first-time first-year students at your institution?

b. FTE academic support professionals assigned to tutoring
   i. Operationalized survey item (___ FTEs): How many FTE academic support professionals are assigned to tutoring at your institution?
Discussion Activity

- Thinking of your institution in particular, what are some potential uses for national comparative data on community colleges’ organizational structures and policies associated with enhanced persistence, transfer and completion?

- In what contexts at your institution would this kind of comparative data be discussed?

- What is the most useful format for information like this to be shared?
Discussion Activity – The National Picture

• How can comparative data on *how community colleges organize for student success* contribute to national conversations about community colleges and student outcomes?
Questions & Concluding Thoughts
Contact Us

Project on Academic Success
Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University
hossler@indiana.edu and mziskin@indiana.edu
http://pas.indiana.edu

USC Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice
University of Southern California
sschulz@usc.edu
http://www.usc.edu/cerpp

American Association of Community Colleges
Annual Convention, April 9-12, 2011, New Orleans