

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

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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



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

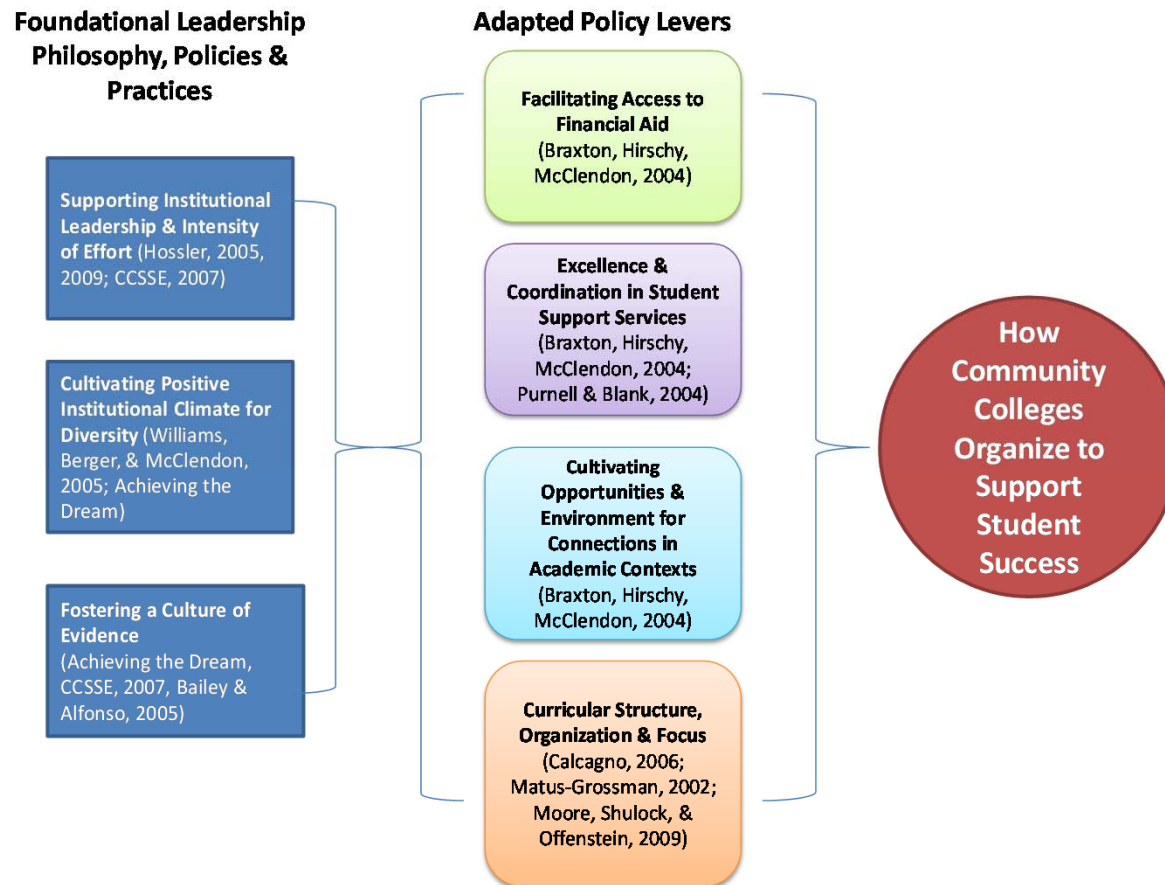


Codes and Constructs

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



Conceptual Framework





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?

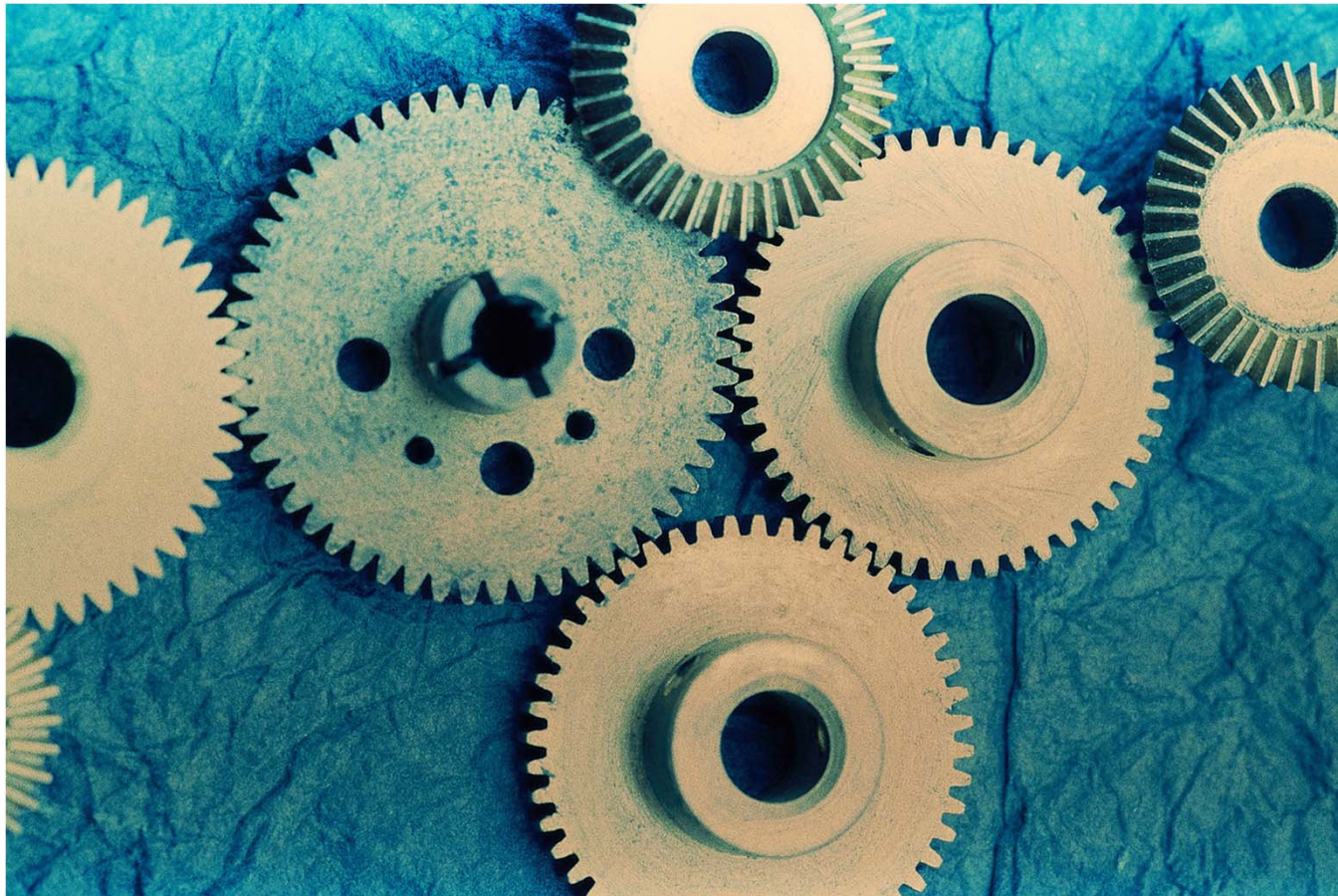
Discussion Activity – The National Picture



- 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



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

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