The College Access and Success Assessment (CASA)

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USC Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice

- Founded in 2007 at the University of Southern California

- **Center Goals**
  - Provide forums that allow scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to share their perspectives and further generate ideas that enhance our understanding of enrollment issues
  - Conduct and sponsor research
  - Enhance the level of professionalism within the enrollment management field
  - Serve as a national hub for information relating to enrollment issues
Today’s Current Context

• We know that college is important
  - Bachelor’s degree holders earn approx. $21,000 more annually than high school graduates and $1 million more during their working careers
  - Eight in ten job openings in the U.S. over the next decade will require postsecondary education or training
  - Expectations of employers and colleges are converging
  - There are social benefits associated with educational attainment

• We know that President Obama has set the goal of making the U.S. the nation with the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020

• We know that Secretary Duncan believes schools should be held responsible for student outcomes
Today's Current Context

• We know not enough students are enrolling in college
  - Over 30% of students who complete high school do not immediately enroll in a postsecondary institution
  - 48% of 18- to 24-year olds have no college education whatsoever
  - Gaps in the college enrollment rate continue to persist by race/ethnicity, family income, and parental education

• We know not enough students are completing college
  - 37% of students who immediately enroll in a four-year institution will not graduate within six years
  - Less than one-third of the U.S. population has completed a bachelor's degree
  - The bachelor's degree attainment gap between white and non-white students has widened in the last three decades
The Problem

• America’s high schools do not currently have a reliable method of evaluating and enhancing efforts to ensure students are encouraged and prepared for college and career success.
The Solution

- **College Access and Success Assessment (CASA)**

- **CASA’s foundation is built upon the following definition of college-going culture:**
  - College-going culture is the environment, attitudes, and behaviors in schools and communities that support and encourage students and their families to obtain the information, tools, and perspectives to ensure access to and success in postsecondary education en route to productive and sustainable careers.
CASA

- A survey of approximately 150 questions/statements
- Survey 12th grade students within each school who have been enrolled from 9th through 12th grade
- Survey administered during one 45 minute class period
- Survey is comprised of three components:
  - Environmental
  - Attitudinal
  - Behavioral
- Uses National Student Clearinghouse data to determine predictive values of survey items on college attendance
CASA: Environmental Component

- Measures the extent to which students perceive their schools help to foster a college-going culture

- Environmental Constructs
  - Accountability
  - Communication
  - Curriculum
  - School Requirements
  - Student Tracking/Use of Data
  - School Climate
  - Student Support
  - Advising
  - School Facilities
  - Student Co-Curricular
  - Opportunities
  - Support for Parents/Family
  - Members
  - Partnerships
CASA: Attitudinal Component

- Assesses student attitudes regarding the extent to which they value a college degree and their perceived capacity to pursue and complete a college degree

- Attitudinal Constructs
  - Perceived value of a college degree
  - The financial aid process/college costs
  - College preparation
  - Enrollment in college
  - The college application process
  - How college works
  - The admissions process
  - Expectations for college success
CASA: Behavioral Component

• Measures the extent to which students are behaving in ways conducive to college-going and in ways that reflect college readiness

• Constructs come from environmental component as well as other research
Outcomes

• Predictability of survey items

• School reports
  - School CASA Total Score
  - School CASA Component Scores
    • Demographic subset reports
  - Overall CASA Total Score
    • Useful for benchmarking
Benefits

• Only one standard 40-50 minute class session is required

• Schools can identify short-term and long-term trends

• Schools can target resources in areas statistically shown to enhance college-going

• Simple and valid accountability

• Benchmarking
Current Partners

• Fresno Unified School District (CA)

• Long Beach Unified School District (CA)
Next Steps

- Pilot Study in April 2010
- Descriptive reports in July 2010
- 2011 survey recruits in Fall 2010
- Clearinghouse data released in January 2011
- Complete reports released in April 2011
Questions and Feedback

Presentation will be available at:
http://www.usc.edu/cerpp

Click on: CERPP Presentations