UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS REPORT 2016

Institutional Practice/Topic #1: Reducing Performance Gaps by Introducing Students to Assisting Under-resourced Students through Instruction

Purpose, Goal, or Objective
In FY2015, the College's Achieving the Dream (AtD) goals centered on reducing performance gaps between African-American students and white students, increasing completion rates in gatekeeper courses, and expanding retention efforts in non-academic areas for student success. One of the initiatives that specifically addresses Underrepresented Groups is the *Bridges Out of Poverty* program designed for college students. It is called *Investigations into Economic Class*. Through this intervention, both females and African-American students received specialized instruction to increase their success inside and outside the classroom.

Date of Implementation
A pilot of the *Bridges Out of Poverty* course was offered in the Fall 2014 term and followed by a Spring 2015 pilot section. With positive feedback and results, it was scaled-up for the Fall 2015/Spring 2016 terms.

Description of Program Elements or Strategies that Make the Program Successful
One of the main goals of this initiative is to reduce inequities that create barriers to personal success. To achieve high rates of success for students, especially students traditionally facing the most significant barriers to achievement, colleges must have a student-centered vision that addresses diversity of preparedness and needs. This 16-week course works to increase awareness of and resources for students living with daily instability. Students learn how to create a future story and use critical thinking and knowledge of college and community resources to overcome barriers and reach their educational goals.

Evidence of Success
The Fall 2014 cohort was small, only 6 students, but the course had an 83% course completion rate and 100% of the students who passed the course continued from the fall to spring semester. The facilitators also received such positive student feedback that the AtD Equity and Inclusion sub-team proposed scaling this intervention to three sections in the Fall 2015 semester. Because the learning objectives so closely align with the College's Success in College orientation course, the team received approval to offer these three *Investigations* sections to students in place of the Success in College requirement for all degree-seeking students.

Local businesses and the Danville Housing Authority have also recognized the need for this type of training. They invited our *Investigations into Economic Class* instructor to teach sections at different locations in the College district. Many of the participants were DACC students or became them soon after the class was completed.

The effects of this intervention widens the College's focus from the race-based lens to the economic-based lens. The broadened perspective allows the College to assist more students in the underrepresented groups' categories.

Institutional Practice/Topic #2: Increasing Persistence and Graduation Rates of Underrepresented Students through Institutional Framework and Culture.

Purpose, Goal, or Objective
The College's Achieving the Dream (AtD) Leadership team commissioned two teams to be fully active with the start of fiscal year 2015. The first team to be highlighted is the AtD Data team. It was restructured from a team that began at the inception of the AtD initiative on campus. With the foundation set for a culture of student success, the need for common data research and focus was apparent. The Data team was designed to 1) define key performance indicators (to establish common goals for the College and AtD sub-teams); 2) provide data perspectives that will help users re-frame policies and procedures as needed; 3) gather and provide consistent data pulls for interventions; 4) develop a calendar of data reports to reduce redundancy of reports and efficiency of staff; 5) provide the AtD Leadership team with key data findings after data and reports are reviewed.

The second team added to the College's infrastructure was the AtD Progression & Completion team. After focusing on the first-year experience for several years and establishing a plan for this time frame, the Leadership team decided to create the Progression and Completion sub-team at the urging of the college's AtD coaches. This team is comprised of eleven members from across campus that work to bring about broad systemic change to policies and procedures concerning student progression through academic programs and completion of degrees and certificates. Underrepresented groups and other groups identified due to performance gaps are the main focus of the team.

Date of Implementation
Both teams were completely activated by the start of Fiscal Year 2015 and continue today.

Description of Program Elements or Strategies that Make the Program Successful
Community colleges make choices every day that may change the course of a student's life and when decision-making is informed by data, there is heightened efficiency and focus that yields alignment in purpose. When used effectively, data highlights when and where students struggle, helps prioritize efforts around what is working and what is not, and sets a direct, clear course toward sustainable institutional change that supports student achievement.

During the Progression & Completion team's first-year, they determined three main initiatives to increase graduation rates and improve student success: 1) the need to implement an automatic degree audit process to help students remain aware of their progress and help advisors determine who may be close to completing a degree or certificate; 2) institutional policy review; and 3) compiling data of who the second-year populations are to better understand their obstacles to student success.

Evidence of Success
DACC administers the AtD Principles Assessment Survey, which is used to solicit stakeholder feedback and group reflection. The assessment tool was administered to a number of college-wide stakeholders to ensure an inclusive representation. Based on the survey results, DACC saw an increase in respondents who strongly agree with all survey questions concerning our process for identifying achievement gaps. This stems from the focus we have had over the last few years on our African-American students, and more recently, our under-resourced students.

The Data team worked quickly to identify the data needs of the AtD sub-teams, institutional committees, departments and divisions, and the College's leadership. To capture the synergy of the College, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were established and communicated to the entire college. KPIs focusing on degree and certificate completion, persistence, developmental advancement, and gatekeeper course completion provide the data needed to identify the performance gaps of underrepresented groups,

especially those of minorities, male/female differences, and Pell/Non-Pell students. Providing an institution-wide focus increases the momentum to reduce the performance gaps and increase student completion.

Below are the results from the initiatives completed above:
1. As the institution's withdrawal policy was studied to understand student use, misuse, and need for change to better support student success, the data surprisingly showed that the College does not have a problem with the policy itself, as originally speculated. Now, the team has decided to focus on the actual withdrawal procures, to encourage and support students through the process, in hopes of retaining them.
2. A Degree Audit sub-team was assembled to lead the work needed to create an automated degree audit process. The system was completed at the end of FY15. It has been used by the Admissions Office for a completion campaign to encourage students who are close to earning their degree or certificate to return to campus for their last remaining classes.
3. Data was compiled to define second-year populations. Data will be used to identify performance gaps and areas in need of improvement for increased student completions in a timely manner.

Additional results documented due to the initiatives above as well as other student success/ completion strategies:
1. The number of female students who completed their degree within 150% time increased from 29.2% in FY13 to 39.3% in FY14.
2. The number of African-American students who completed their degree within 150% time increased from 20.5% in FY13 to 34.8% in FY14.
3. The number of Hispanic students who completed their degree within 150% time increased from 15.6% in FY 13 to 30.3% in FY14.

We believe these numbers will continue to rise with the continuance of targeted student success strategies for underrepresented groups and the general population.