

# Data Brief



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Danville Area Community College

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## Mentoring Results

With recent changes to the mentoring program, results are starting to be seen. Looking through different lenses, DACC student retention rates are close to unchanged (in some instances increasing slightly and in others decreasing slightly). This is much better than expected, as traditionally lowering unemployment rates in the county have resulted in significantly lower first year retention, and overall community college enrollment.

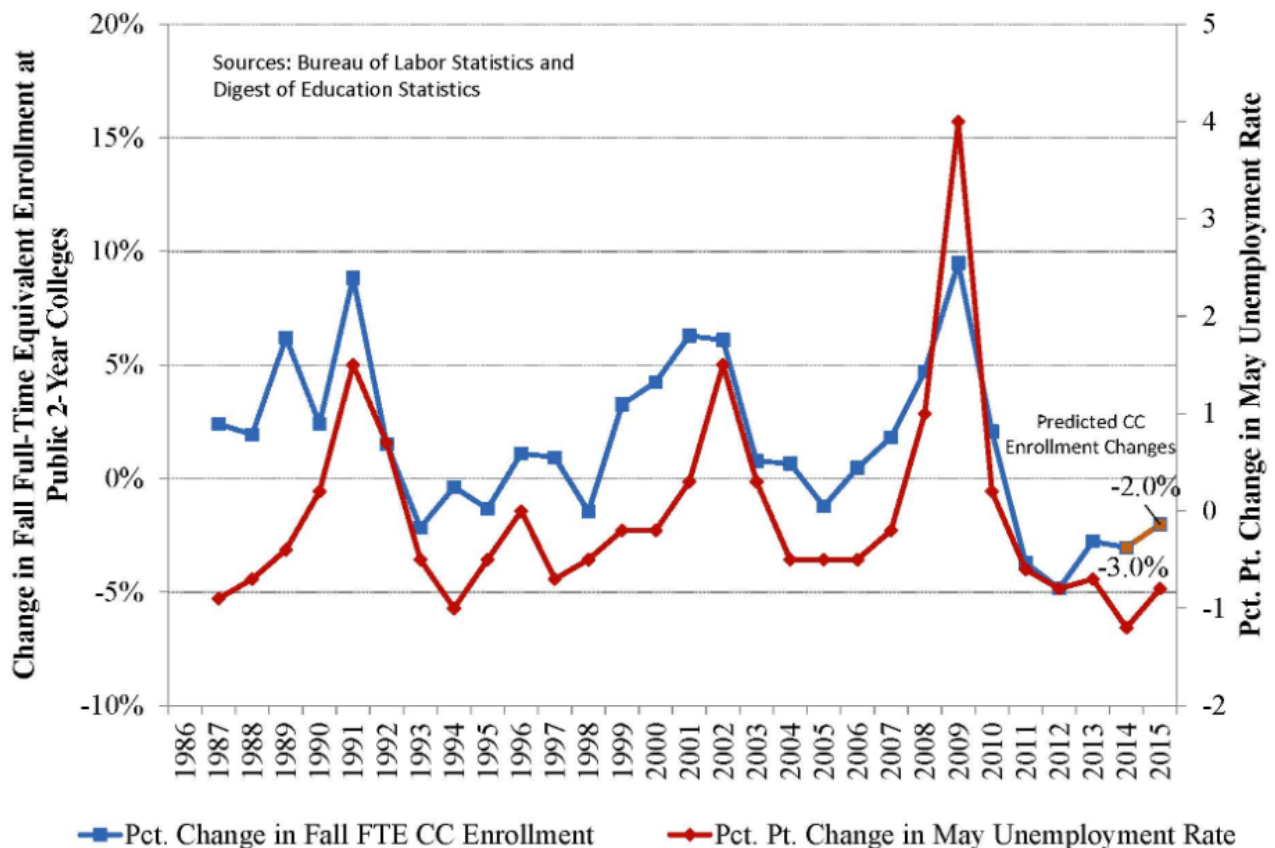
Erika Harris conducted two surveys to collect information on how people viewed the program's current state. The first survey reached a small sample of mentees. Although some reported not knowing that they had a mentor, almost all that did said their mentor made contact both fall and spring semesters and that contact was helpful. In her survey of

mentors, those who responded reported having from two to seven mentees, with many feeling three to four would be a more comfortable number to mentor.

To get a head start working with new students, both the Mentoring Program and the Equity and Inclusion Team are reaching out to the students earlier than last year. Since many students settle into patterns their first six weeks of class, it is hoped that the earlier intervention will help these students settle into habits leading to more classroom success.

Anyone interested in mentoring please reach out to Erika Harris. And anyone interested in assisting with mentoring of Black male students join the Equity and Inclusion team or reach out to Carol Nichols and Candace McNeal.

## Rule of Thumb: Community College Enrollments Change 2.5% for Every 1 Point Change in the May Unemployment Rate





## Assessing Student Learning

One of the biggest questions resulting from the HLC visit is what is the plan for improving the assessment of student learning at DACC? A good place to begin is refocusing on what assessment is and its value in our courses.

The Glossary of Education Reform's website defines assessment as "...the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students." Based on this definition, assessment of DACC courses and programs provides us with the tools necessary to properly prepare our students in transitioning to their next phase—whether into more education or directly into the work field. The DACC mission states that students should be gaining "quality, innovative, and accessible learning experiences which meet lifelong...needs...."

Assessment at DACC is an important part of this process. Instructional consultant L. Dee Fink states that "significant learning experiences"—which include regular assessment—enhance individuals' lives and social interactions, create more informed and thoughtful citizens, and prepare people for the work field. Looking through this past year's assessments, DACC faculty are using their assessments to help create significant learning experiences. Examples include:

- Building in more opportunities for growth in social skills in a program as alumni indicate the high level of importance of effective communication abilities in their field.
- Implementing more assessment at the beginning of the semester for determining students' skill level to aid in successful course completion.
- Stating learning outcomes at the beginning of a course or unit to help students understand what they will learn and what successfully meeting the outcomes looks like.

As instructors prepare for the semester these considerations should be turned into action steps focusing on using student learning assessment to better inform and improve teaching and learning. More clearly, how are we growing in our assessment practices so that they lead to significant learning experiences and promotion of life-long learning of DACC students?

## Achieving the Dream Coaching

This past year was the first time in a long time that DACC did not have a campus visit by an ATD Coach. DACC decided to experiment with virtual coaching, a new option offered by ATD, partly to keep the College focused on the Higher Learning Commission visit. DACC's longtime coach, Dr. Luzelma Canales, gave input by phone and email to members of the College's ATD Leadership Team.

It was decided by local ATD leadership, that with the HLC visit complete, the College should return to onsite visits. In reaching out to national leadership the impact of a local visit, particularly input from Dr. Canales, was cited as the reason to return. So, although not yet planned, expect to see the coach on campus later this year.

## Faculty, we need your input !

Currently, two of the ATD committees are seeking additional faculty input. If you have time in your schedule, and an interest in supporting the College, please consider joining:

**Student Experience and Retention**  
(meeting 3rd Tuesday @ 1:30)

**Teaching and Learning**  
(meeting 2nd Tuesday @ 1:00)