

# Data Brief



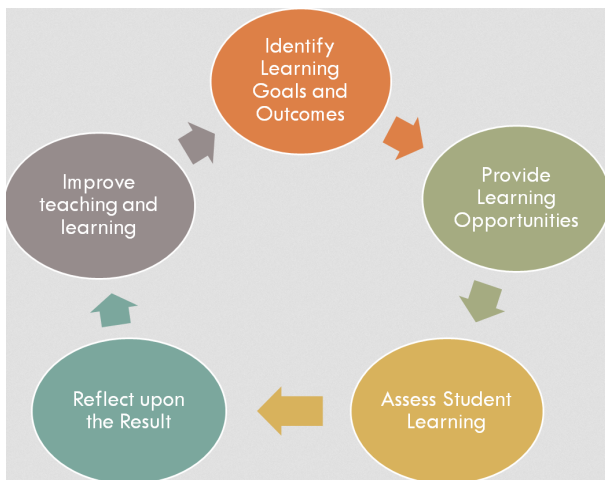
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## Improvements through Student Assessment

Recently, the college has put forth more effort into documenting how student assessment is driving changes in the curriculum and throughout the college. In classrooms, this can be outlined simply by the chart below:



And more generally throughout the college:



Below is a listing of some improvements which have a direct tie to student assessments.

### Academic Program Improvements

**Culinary** - To further develop students' "positive interpersonal abilities to create a team environment in the workplace," the decision was made to have students spend more time organizing the catering events as a team.

**Medical Assistant** - Additional instruction on ergonomics will be added to the program to increase patient and personal safety after poor results on a wheelchair-to-chair competency rubric showed poor student performance.

**Physical Science** - As students perceive the level of mathematical and critical reasoning required to be challenging or very challenging when surveyed, the class time spent on proper scientific reasoning has been increased.

**Social Science** - To improve student performance on critical thinking assignments and tasks, a critical thinking grid will be shared with students prior to their initial assignments so the students have a better grasp of what level of performance the instructor will be expecting.

### Departmental Improvements

**Computer and Network Services** - As a part of monitoring internet usage and bandwidth it was seen that the college bandwidth was occasionally near its limits, so recently funds were allocated, and the bandwidth was doubled.

**Corporate Education** - To assist area employers with hiring, the college is implementing the Marketing Mechanical Aptitude Assessment, which would complement the existing ACT WorkKeys, for companies to avoid a bad hire.

**Financial Aid** - As a result of a number of students applying late, or too late, for financial assistance, the department has been working more frequently and earlier with groups of students to fill out their forms. As a result, more files were completed earlier than in past years.



Foundation - To facilitate more one-on-one time between donors and their students, the annual Honors Program was reduced in length. Feedback has been very positive and will hopefully lead to continued or growing scholarship funding.

Marketing - In an attempt to reach the desired audience and reduce cost, the department is moving more towards targeted online advertising than traditional mass media. Although hard to measure its effectiveness, the department has been analyzing the usage data provided by the digital companies.

### Institutional Improvements

Initial Course Placement.- In an attempt to better place incoming students, the college is now using high school math grades for math placement and high school GPAs for reading placement in addition to the traditional placement testing.

Textbook Costs - Understanding that the last item paid for, and occasionally not purchased due to financial constraints, is textbooks, in recent years more classes have included a rental option, used free online resources, or created their own resource to reduce costs. As book costs continue to remain a stumbling block to students success, more efforts are needed.

Bachelor’s Degrees - To increase the number of the district population with bachelor’s degrees, a more 2+2 and some 3+1 articulation agreements with four– year institutions have been created. Some of these agreements would allow a student to complete their bachelor’s degree without leaving the community.

Mandatory Advising - Although retention, persistence, and graduation rates are increasing, the continuing gap between full– and part-time students led to increased advising efforts for that part time student group. Although not all the results are in, the Mandatory Advising Project is up and running.

### The National Idea of How to Measure a Community College’s Success is Changing

In past decades, the measure of a community college’s success has been the same as that of a four-year institution: graduation rates of first-time, full-time students. A number of community college leaders have protested the use of this one figure for multiple reasons

- (1) This excluded part-time and transfer-in students which are a large percentage of enrolled students
- (2) Many students transfer to a four year institution without degree completion so are not considered a success

Now, with some leaders wanting to compare a colleges value through “bright lines” (a number, such as a graduation rate, by which a college is either above and passes or below and fails) the need for discussion on the topic is not slowing down.

Recently, the Department of Education, through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), began collecting information to give a more comprehensive picture. It now classifies students new to an institution into one of four groups: first-time full-time, first-time part-time, non-first-time full-time and non-first-time part-time. For each student group, they are classifying students into one of four categories based on their progress over the next eight years: completing, transferring, still enrolled at the institution, or no longer enrolled.

The 2008 cohort of DACC students results are in the chart below. Combining the graduate with the transfer students gives a better picture as to the number of successful students. At DACC, each of the four groups includes between 100 and 250 students.

[A decade ago, the college was experiencing 3-year graduation rates of below 30%. Since the start of Achieving the Dream at the college in 2009, those rates have slowly increased to nearly 40% today. The 31% is from a cohort of students before those initiatives.]

So, as we continue to look at retention, persistence and graduation rates, the transfer rate will slowly be moving into the discussion to give colleges a better measure of student success.

### DACC Eight Year Outcome Measures, 2008 Student Cohort

		Graduated at DACC	Transferred, without	Still enrolled at DACC	No longer enrolled
First-time	Full-time	31%	29%	2%	38%
First-time	Part-time	19%	26%	2%	52%
Not-first-time	Full-time	60%	23%	1%	17%
Not-first-time	Part-time	34%	33%	3%	30%