

Student Success Update

COLLEGE ACTION PROJECTS

Project Title: **Implement Achieving the Dream (AtD) Initiatives to Increase the Persistence, Completion, and Transfer Rates of At-Risk Students** Project #: **2.1.2**
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Introduction



For the first time in U.S. history, the current generation of college-age Americans will be less educated than their parents' generation, yet our workplaces require higher-level skills than ever before. A healthy economy and democracy depend upon an educated citizenry, and increasingly, because of rapidly changing demographics and record levels of poverty, that means creating the conditions for more low-income students and students of color to attain postsecondary credentials.

Community colleges are a vital component in returning the U.S. to its place as a global leader in higher education degree attainment; however, fewer than half of all students who enter community college with the goal of earning a certificate or degree have met their goal six years later. And those numbers are much worse for low-income students and students of color. More than just their hopes and dreams are at stake: the very foundation of our economy depends on increasing student success.

Achieving the Dream's Goal: Success for more community college students, especially students of color and low-income students.

Success is defined by the rates at which students:

- Successfully complete remedial or developmental instruction and advance to credit-bearing courses
- Enroll in and successfully complete the initial college-level or gateway courses in subjects such as math and English
- Complete the courses they take with a grade of "C" or better
- Persistence from one term to the next
- Attain a certificate or degree

Source: Retrieved from <http://www.achievingthedream.org/goal> December 18, 2012

Purpose/Goals

The purpose of Achieving the Dream is to increase the completion rates of at-risk students



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Goals:

- ✓ *EN 100 Class/Lab Hybrid*

The goal is to increase student success and persistence for students in EN 100. The class/hybrid model integrates a computer-based writing experience with in-class tutoring to improve students writing competencies.

- ✓ *Math Sequencing*

The goals are to improve teaching and learning of math objectives to improve student success and persistence through the developmental through gateway Math sequence.

- ✓ *African-American Male Mentoring Initiative: Alpha Beta Omega*

The purpose of this initiative is to increase the GPA, persistence, and completion rates of African-American male students and other students who participate.

- ✓ *Reading Apprenticeship*

The purpose of this initiative is to address the general tendency toward low success rates of students in developmental classes and in basic gateway classes. The basic components are:

- *Train faculty and staff*
- *Create and implement RA interventions*
- *Collect baseline and post-intervention data to see if interventions made any impact*

GOAL	RESULTS
<p>EN 100 Class/Lab Hybrid</p>	<p>The AtD team meets bi-weekly to plan common assignments and assessment of student learning.</p> <p>We upscaled to 7 sections from 4 last year.</p> <p>Adapted the tutoring model to Fridays mandatory tutoring session (SI model); this is a change from last winter, when the students were to meet with the tutor outside of class. Many students didn't attend.</p>
<p>Math Sequencing</p>	<p>Item analysis completed, changes to final exam, and teaching strategies implemented Item analysis in process of being repeated to determine gains, if any. Cycle to be repeated.</p> <p>Coordinator hired, common syllabus, assignments, and core final exam questions allowed data analysis of common final exam. Results shared with instructors, revisions to common final exam, process to be repeated Fall 2012. Comparison with pre-assessment for MA 107, textbook selected to improve sequence from MA 096/7 to MA 098.</p> <p>MA 095 common finals in process of item analysis result to be shared with instructors during professional development.</p> <p>MA 107 administered pre and post assessment of topics considered necessary for success. Result shared with department, and individual instructors were given their results privately compared to the entire course. The process will be continued, comparing Winter 2011 to Winter 2012.</p>

Highlights:

AtD is encouraged by your progress in implementing the Achieving the Dream model:

Committed Leadership: We are impressed with the strong commitment expressed by the president and board members. The recent decision to purchase a Blackboard Analytics data warehouse through Title III funding is encouraging. It is likely that this will greatly increase the college's capacity to use data for making institutional improvement as well as day-to-day decision-making. We are pleased with the serious course reform efforts led by key faculty in English, reading, and math. Further, we are optimistic about the re-configuration of the Core Team into a permanent college success council.

Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services: We are encouraged that you have plans to upgrade your IT and IR functions. The data warehouse has the potential to make data accessible to key stakeholders on the campus. This upgraded IT and IR infrastructure will also assist the college with longitudinal cohort tracking and increase the college's ability to disaggregate data to look more deeply at problems and to identify where interventions are needed. We applaud the addition of an emphasis on data collection and analysis about African American male students. The sophistication and helpfulness of institutional research leadership is impressive. We fully support the decision to develop a stronger assessment plan and professional development plan based upon longitudinal data on student success.

GOAL	RESULTS
<p>African American Male Mentoring/Leadership Initiative: Alpha Beta Omega (ABΩ)</p>	<p>Accepted 20 members during Fall 2012</p> <p>Recruited mentors and matched to students, hired Peer Success Coach</p> <p>Created ABΩ uniform and distributed to members</p> <p>Developed semester long workshop and speaker series</p> <p>Assisted students with personal barriers such as transportation, overcoming criminal history, housing</p> <p>Held Leadership Summits for members</p> <p>Celebrated end of semester success with GVSU Guest Speaker</p>
<p>Reading Apprenticeship (RA)</p>	<p>Two additional faculty trained to be RA trainers, bringing total of certified trainers to 3.</p> <p>In depth RA training offered to 35 adult and developmental faculty by West Ed. -- follow up workshops provided by GRCC faculty.</p> <p>In depth RA training provided to all reading instructors in Fall 2012 and ongoing training throughout year is scheduled and planned.</p> <p>Introduction to RA given to 65 AFP faculty, entire full time English Department with some adjuncts, 25 miscellaneous faculty on Learning Day, and 6 Upward Bound faculty and staff.</p> <p>Intro to RA planned for CJ, PY, and JT, and natural science faculty.</p> <p>Assessment plan revised and in place.</p>

Highlights (cont)

Broad Engagement: We endorse the college's decision to expand faculty engagement on the Core Team and for including faculty in the data summit development. We have observed that broad-base engagement of stakeholders, especially faculty, is essential to successful implementation of the Achieving the Dream interventions and other related student success work. We are pleased to hear about the success of the large leadership and faculty workshop held in spring 2012, to increase a consistent understanding of Achieving the Dream.

Systemic Institutional Improvement: It was impressive to note that Grand Rapids Community College has already aligned the Achieving the Dream interventions with the accreditation, planning and program review processes. By institutionalizing the work, the college can ensure greater buy-in and sustainability of the interventions and changes in practices. We are impressed with the excellent monitoring report that you have developed and shared with the Board and the college. Lastly, we commend the inclusion of student success "ends" and new dashboard emphasis.

**Relationship to Other Projects:**

2.1.1: College Success Program

5.1.1: Increase Student Persistence by Making CLS 100 Mandatory

Next Steps:

- Continue all four interventions
- Assess impact of interventions
- Examine opportunities to scale up promising interventions
- Continue to examine outcomes from the August 2012 Data Summit for additional needed interventions

Challenges:***From the perspective of Achieving the Dream:***

- **Committed Leadership:** We encourage GRCC to continue to build upon the leadership support by identifying roles for student affairs administrators and mid-level instructional leaders. This will help strengthen the college's capacity to implement the student success agenda in all levels of the institution. We recognize the need for strong leadership at the deans/department levels for student success initiatives and gap analysis/remedies. We suggest that you consider adding faculty union representation on the key Achieving the Dream teams.
- **Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services:** We encourage the college to continue to enhance its research capacity. Examine ways to educate college personnel to use data to inform decision-making and improve programs. We also encourage the college to take advantage of resources and data tools available through Achieving the Dream, Inc. We recognize the continuing need for good, accessible analytical systems. In some cases, student outcome measures and goals need to be clarified so that they can be measured. We feel it would be helpful to analyze student data annually to determine new and changing gaps. We recommend creating evaluation methods for key strategies like Reading Apprenticeship.
- **Broad Engagement:** Since the college has already aligned its Achieving the Dream work with accreditation, planning, and program review, we recommend that the college build an engagement plan around stakeholder participation in these on-going activities. This will require considerable support from the senior leadership team and faculty leaders. Further, we suggest that the college explore ways to engage adjunct faculty and students at a meaningful level in the student success efforts at the college. We also think it is critical to find and include key African American faculty leadership in the initiatives.
- **Systemic Institutional Improvement:** We feel that a professional development plan to complement student success initiatives would bring a sense of common purpose to the college. We recommend that you continue to build the IR and IT infrastructure. Other colleges have found it helpful to examine ways to attract additional external resources such, as the Title III program, to further advance their student success agenda.
- **Other recommendations:** The year of planning and now a first year of implementation of Achieving the Dream-based improvement initiatives has gone well. A growing enthusiasm for the work is apparent. We look forward to seeing what will happen as you broaden and deepen faculty and student development staff engagement and as you find additional leadership among faculty for the plans to better meet the needs of your growing African American population.