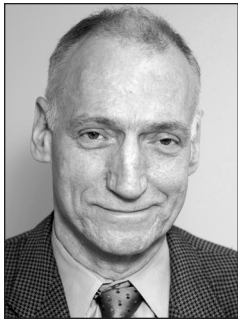


CCRC Currents

COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER

Improving Student Success: Rigorous Research and Systemic Reform

THOMAS R. BAILEY



Community colleges play a strikingly important role in providing educational access to persons from diverse backgrounds who hold a multiplicity of aspirations. They have comparatively low tuition costs, maintain open-door admission policies, and are located in the vicinity of

most residential areas throughout the country. These characteristics make college attendance possible for some students who would otherwise have little opportunity for education beyond high school. Nearly half the nation's undergraduates are enrolled in community colleges. Students of color, low-income, first generation, and immigrant students are all concentrated in community colleges. And compared to those at four-year colleges, community college students are more likely to attend part time, to have children, to be older, and to be academically underprepared.

Thus, community colleges are effectively launching many of our nation's hardest-to-serve students on their first steps of a college education and providing a second chance at college for adults seeking to better their lives. They are fundamental institutions in carrying out the equity agenda in higher education—in leveling the playing field by giving all students a fair shot at college no matter where they attended high school or whether or not they come from families with resources that facilitate access to college and success once there.

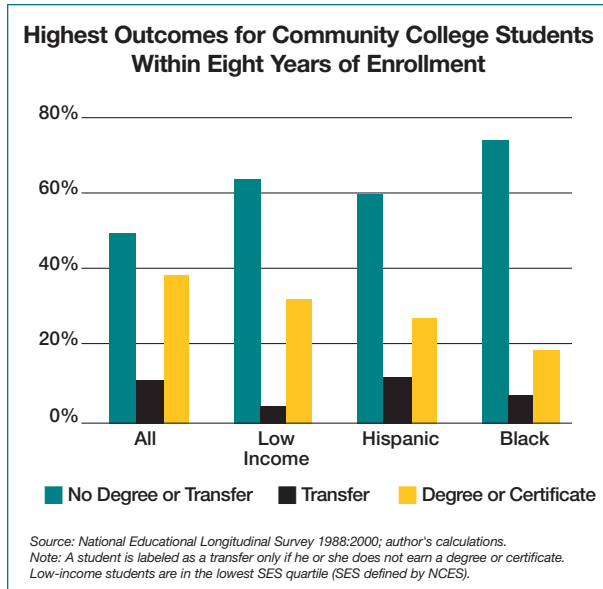
Moreover, because so many students enroll in college without adequate preparation, these institutions play a key role in getting students ready for college-level coursework through developmental education programs. Roughly half of first-time community college students take at least one reme-

dial course. CCRC continues to conduct research on the impact of this crucial, but understudied, community college function. CCRC also continues to examine the increasing involvement community colleges have with dual enrollment programs. Once limited to high-achieving students, dual enrollment is increasingly seen as a model for helping a greater range of high school students prepare for college.

While community colleges can be proud of their role in providing access to college for a wide variety of students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, too many of those students make little progress once enrolled. Eight years after enrollment, 17% of community college students complete fewer than ten credits of coursework. Over the same period, fewer than 40% of community college students earn a certificate or degree at any institution. The rates of completion among low-income students and students of color are of particular concern. After eight years, only 29% of low-income and 20% of Black community college students earn a certificate or degree.

Table of Contents

<i>National Center for Postsecondary Research</i>	4
<i>Achieving the Dream:</i>	
<i>Community Colleges Count</i>	4
<i>The Bridges to Opportunity Initiative</i>	5
<i>Student Persistence in Community Colleges</i>	6
<i>Assessing Non-Credit Occupational Education at Community Colleges</i>	6
<i>Postsecondary Achievement of CTE Students in Dual Enrollment</i>	6
<i>The NSF's Advanced Technological Education Program</i>	7
<i>Automotive Manufacturing Collaborative</i>	7
<i>Postsecondary Content Area Reading-Writing Intervention</i>	8
<i>Virtual Enterprises International Program</i>	8
<i>Announcements</i>	8
<i>Upcoming Conference Presentations</i>	10
<i>Selected Publications</i>	12



It is clear that more progress needs to be made in improving student outcomes. At the same time, it is important to recognize that while community colleges can do better, cuts in funding pose a severe threat to the equity mission of these institutions. It is ironic that community colleges enroll the hardest-to-serve students but receive less funding per student than four-year institutions.

In the last decade or so, we have seen the budgets for community colleges in many states stagnate or shrink. This has been caused by a number of factors, most notably the recession of the early 2000s, when state higher education budgets were hit hard. The impact on community colleges was greatest, however, because they are more dependent on state revenues than four-year public colleges. Though some community colleges have benefited in the last couple of years as their state economies have grown stronger, a debate over the public's role in offering higher education has also taken place. This has led to a shift in funding to medical care, pensions, prisons, and other services to the detriment of community colleges. Despite the cyclical ups and downs of funding, the long-term trend has been a shrinking share of state funding going to community colleges.

For too long community colleges have been trying to do too much with too little. Nevertheless, colleges can always do more with the resources they have. In order to improve, however, colleges need a better sense of where and why students have trouble, and what policies and practices are most effective in improving student progress. Among policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, a

great deal of attention is now focused on how well students succeed once they enter college.

The accountability movement illustrates this focus, and it highlights the need to have reliable data to measure student progress. Federal and state governments are pressing colleges to provide more data demonstrating evidence of student outcomes and institutional performance. And accreditation agencies are also asking colleges to collect and analyze data. They are beginning to require colleges to show evidence of student learning and achievement, and they want colleges to establish systems of institutional self-assessment to produce such evidence.

The desire for more data and better analysis is also influenced by a growing enthusiasm for using data in college management. This notion holds that data should be used not only for the purpose of accountability, but also for the explicit purpose of improving student outcomes and institutional performance. Instead of simply pursuing discrete intervention programs that help limited numbers of students, colleges with access to rich data on student progress are better able to consider reform in terms of broad policy that creates fundamental change in the way that a college operates. Indeed, CCRC is involved in two national initiatives that aim to improve the outcomes of community college students by engaging in systemic change—Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count and Bridges to Opportunity. Both emphasize the rigorous use of data to inform decision making at the state and institutional level.

A common idea in such reforms is to collect data on individual students over extended periods of time (including courses taken, grades received, and programs completed) and place them into a database that is organized by cohorts of students who enter college in the same term. By doing so, colleges can analyze what actually happens to all their enrolled students. For example, they can analyze remedial or college-level course pathways taken by each cohort of students, and disaggregate the findings by various student characteristics (such as race or ethnicity, or full- or part-time status) to determine if there are gaps in achievement among particular student groups. Such analysis helps colleges to chart student progress over time and identifies points where students tend to struggle or leave college entirely. Colleges can then develop strategies to improve student progress based on a diagnosis of the problems, and they can go on to evaluate the

impact of those strategies to inform improvements and guide allocation of resources to support practices that promote student success.

Yet such reforms cannot be undertaken broadly until reliable, easy-to-use data collection and analysis systems are commonplace and until there is adequate research literacy on college campuses to carry out, interpret, and act upon meaningful research. Motivated in part by this quandary, CCRC has begun to examine the capacity for institutional research (IR) and organizational transformation at community colleges.

There are several barriers that impede the development of a rigorous institutional research function at community colleges. First, IR offices are typically small and underfunded. About half the colleges surveyed in a recent CCRC study employ just one or fewer full-time IR staff persons. Second, campus-based student information systems present a problem. The difficulty many colleges have in “cleaning” student data entered at different times by multiple departments, and the difficulty they have in extracting these data are strong impediments to doing research that could inform improvements to institutional performance. Third, investing time and effort into developing both a capacity for rigorous research and an atmosphere in which such research is valued and utilized is not a priority among the leadership found at most community colleges. Indeed there remains considerable skepticism on the part of both administrators and faculty about the legitimacy of sophisticated studies in explaining student outcomes.

This situation is changing, albeit slowly. A small number of colleges do use longitudinal data to manage and improve programs and services. These colleges typically combine institutional research, planning, institutional effectiveness, and assessment into one department, which is led by an individual with experience and advanced training in research who is a full member of the college’s leadership team. Building such an elaborate and integrated research function can take a long time to establish, however, in part because it must gain college-wide credibility. At one college advanced in its use of data for improving student outcomes, efforts in this direction began in the 1980s and did not take hold until about ten years later during the 1990s.

In most cases, colleges today do not have the institutional research capacity to allow them to use their own data to develop a full understanding of what happens to their students. As colleges work to

develop this capacity, state community college offices can provide tremendous help by maintaining and using comprehensive student record databases. Florida and Washington, for example, are particularly committed to the use of statewide data to track the progress of students. Florida is a national leader in its ability to track students from high school into college and throughout the public higher education system. The state office provides extensive feedback to its individual colleges. Washington State has also done important research tracking students into the labor market. These practices may be one reason why both states are well above average on measures of student completion.

Community colleges continue to face profound challenges in meeting the needs of their most disadvantaged students. Shrinking revenues in particular have made it difficult for colleges to maintain the teaching and services necessary for their growing and increasingly diverse student bodies. Still, as colleges continue to seek more resources, they can, through better analysis of their programs and services, focus their resources where they will be most effective. The interest in using rigorous research to inform systemic change at the institutional and state level seems to be increasing among community college presidents, policymakers, and others, which makes this an especially stimulating time for researchers. CCRC will continue to examine how systemic reform efforts develop, whether they spawn greater enthusiasm among other states and institutions, and what implications they have for student success.

Thomas R. Bailey is the George and Abby O'Neill Professor of Economics and Education, and Director of the Community College Research Center, the National Center for Postsecondary Research, and the Institute on Education and the Economy at Teachers College, Columbia University.

In this newsletter, you will learn about our new and continuing research, upcoming seminars and conference presentations, and recent publications. Complete information about CCRC is available on our website, <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu>, where you can also sign up to receive bi-weekly E-Alerts and download most of our reports and briefs. We welcome your feedback.

CCRC RESEARCH

Comprising both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, the research conducted by the Community College Research Center is of national importance in the development of an equity agenda that includes adequate preparation, increased access, and educational success for all students.

National Center for Postsecondary Research

In July 2006, the Community College Research Center, in collaboration with partners at MDRC, the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, and professors at Harvard University and Princeton University, was awarded a five-year grant of \$9,813,619 from the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education to establish the National Center for Postsecondary Research (NCPR). Led by CCRC Director Thomas R. Bailey, NCPR is studying the effectiveness of programs designed to help students make the transition to college and master basic skills needed to advance to a degree.

Weak academic preparation and inadequate social skills impede access to and achievement in higher education for millions of young people. Half of all postsecondary students need remediation upon entering college. Furthermore, nearly half the 14.7 million undergraduates at two- and four-year institutions never receive degrees. In response to these problems, NCPR has developed a research agenda to evaluate programs and policies that postsecondary institutions and policymakers have adopted to strengthen academic and other skills. NCPR will carry out a multi-layered research agenda built on random assignment experimental studies. These projects will include the tracking of post-program student outcomes, associated qualitative research, and additional state data analysis, which will generate insights into why programs are or are not effective.

NCPR is committed to working closely with policymakers and practitioners to help strengthen the performance of institutions of higher education. Through its research, NCPR aims to reduce barriers to college and other education programs, ease students' transition from high school to college, make college advancement easier, and increase college completion rates.

Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count

A national multiyear initiative, Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count is designed to improve the educational outcomes of community college students, particularly those who face the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color.

In partnership with seven national organizations, and with initial and ongoing support from Lumina Foundation for Education as well as additional funding from College Spark Washington, The Heinz Endowments, Houston Endowment Inc., KnowledgeWorks Foundation, and Nellie Mae Education Foundation, CCRC is leading the “knowledge development” work for the initiative. The purpose is to provide research and data support to inform the activities of the Achieving the Dream colleges and states and to maximize learning from the initiative for colleges, policymakers, and researchers nationally. Multiple reports and briefs based on this research are available on the CCRC website. CCRC is currently focused on four main areas, which are described below.

Using state data to inform improvements in policy and practice. Center researchers are working with states involved in Achieving the Dream to analyze community college student data collected at the state level with the aim of informing improvements in policy and practice. Much of this research involves tracking cohorts of students over time to examine the educational pathways, milestone achievements, and predictors of educational success of community college students. For example, CCRC is partnering with the Florida Department of Education's Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education to conduct several studies using the department's rich longitudinal student dataset. Among these is a study of the efficacy and educational impacts of developmental education and of different approaches to organizing developmental programs, as well as an analysis of the impact on graduation and transfer of taking a college success course. CCRC is also working with the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to identify “momentum points,” such as moving from adult basic education to college-level courses or passing the first college-level mathematics course, attainment of which is associated with a greater probability of graduation or transfer. Additionally, CCRC is helping the Connecticut Community College System

study the impact of testing and placement policies on student success.

Understanding the “Culture of Evidence” model of institutional improvement. Achieving the Dream seeks to help colleges bring about change that goes beyond specific programmatic interventions and affects the culture and strategic operations of the college. Central to the Achieving the Dream model of institutional change is the “culture of evidence,” which is the idea that colleges can bring about improvements in student outcomes by basing decisions about how to organize, manage, and fund teaching and student support services on evidence of what works to enable student success. CCRC is conducting a series of studies designed to better understand the impact on student outcomes of a greater attention to evidence-based decision making and on the conditions and processes that enable colleges to build a culture of evidence.

For example, researchers completed a study last spring that compared the management practices of community colleges found to have a higher impact on their students’ educational success with those of colleges with a lower impact, identified through analysis of longitudinal, transcript-level data on over 150,000 Florida community college students. Based on field research at these institutions, it was found that high-impact colleges are more likely to align programs and services to support student success. Students of color were generally more successful in colleges with supports targeted to their needs. CCRC also recently completed a national study of institutional research at community colleges, which included a survey of a random sample of community colleges and in-depth interviews with administrators and faculty at 28 colleges in 14 states. This spring (2007), CCRC will conduct a survey of faculty and administrators at Achieving the Dream colleges to better understand the ways in which they use data to design, manage, and deliver programs and services.

Evaluating the implementation of Achieving the Dream. In partnership with MDRC, CCRC is evaluating the implementation of Achieving the Dream at the participating colleges. In spring 2006, the evaluation team conducted extensive interviews at all 27 colleges that joined the initiative in the first round. A key focus of this field research was on the steps the colleges are taking to build a culture of evidence and what they see as the barriers to this work as well as promising approaches. The evaluators also analyzed baseline performance data on students that the colleges are sharing with the initiative and that will be

used to measure their progress over time. The team will make follow-up visits to the Round One colleges in 2009.

Identifying state policies that promote student success. From the beginning, a central component of the Achieving the Dream initiative has been state policy. In each of the states where Achieving the Dream colleges are located, the initiative is working with a lead organization (typically the state community college system office or state association of community colleges) to develop policies that will enhance student success. To help guide that policy effort, Lumina Foundation for Education commissioned an audit of state policies affecting access to, and success in, community colleges. The aim was to establish what policies the states have in place in key areas of community college practice and how well-placed observers in the states judge the effectiveness of those policies. The state policies of interest include ones affecting tuition, student aid, early outreach to students, remedial education, guidance and counseling, transfer articulation, baccalaureate provision, and performance accountability. As a first step, researchers conducted in-depth analyses of policies in the Round One and Two Achieving the Dream states (Connecticut, Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia). Secondly, to supplement the analyses of these seven states, all 50 states were surveyed on selected state policies. Reports summarizing the policy audits of the Round One and Two Achieving the Dream states are available, and the 50-state survey is near completion.

Evaluating the Community College Bridges to Opportunity Initiative

Begun in 2002, the Ford Foundation’s Bridges to Opportunity Initiative is designed to promote state policies that enhance the capacity of community colleges to improve educational and economic opportunities for low-income adults. Six states were selected to participate in the initiative: Colorado, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Mexico, Ohio, and Washington. The states are well along in implementing the Foundation’s model for change: using stakeholder engagement—gaining the support of a broad-based constituency—to bring about changes at the state policy and community college levels that promote educational opportunities for low-income adults. The use of data, specifically student outcomes tracking data, in determining solutions and then measuring progress is also an important part of the model.

CCRC has been assisting Ford since 2003 in evaluating the activities and impacts of the initiative in the six states. Our findings to date indicate that there is promise in the Bridges model for change. The main elements of the model have found resonance in all of the participating states, though each state has interpreted them differently and implemented them with varying levels of emphasis. Bridges has also advanced the development of several influential ideas and approaches that are being adopted outside of the participating states. These include career pathways, integrated basic skills and occupational instruction, and the importance of data collection and analysis in strengthening the performance of community colleges.

Publications related to this research are forthcoming, beginning in spring 2007. The initiative is expected to conclude in mid-2008.

Student Persistence in Community Colleges

It is well-established that many community college students do not persist in their coursework long enough to earn a degree. There is some evidence that institutional practices can encourage student persistence. However, there has been little research on which practices actually help students remain enrolled in college, or why these practices do so. And there has not been investigation of how students themselves learn about these practices, make use of them, or view their usefulness.

With funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, CCRC is studying students' persistence and leaving processes. Researchers interviewed students over two semesters to understand how they make use of student services and other institutional features and to discover if their use of those services is related to their persistence. The results of this study will help colleges understand what factors are related to student retention in order to develop programs and resources encouraging student persistence to graduation.

The project investigates the experiences of students in two urban community colleges. Researchers interviewed a random sample of 44 students who enrolled in college for the first time in fall 2005 and persisted to the spring 2006 semester. Participants were re-interviewed in the fall of 2006. Researchers also observed classes typically taken by first-year students, and interviewed faculty and staff about the colleges' student retention efforts.

Currently, the interview data collected during both waves of fieldwork are being analyzed. Preliminary results indicate that students find Student Success courses to be an important source of information. They find advising systems to be cumbersome and unreliable, however. Students prefer to rely on trusted professors for course advice. Although colleges offer an array of support services, students need a high level of social or cultural capital to access the services and thus do not always use them. A final report will be released in summer 2007.

Assessing Non-Credit Occupational Education at Community Colleges

This project investigates the current relationship between credit and non-credit occupational programs at community colleges. The study is being completed by CCRC researchers with significant participation from two important community college workforce development organizations: the National Council for Workforce Education and the National Council for Continuing Education and Training. These organizations will use the research findings to help establish what particular policy and institutional issues are most critical for community colleges. The study includes analysis based on structured telephone interviews at 20 community colleges in several states as well as a review of state policies regarding non-credit occupational education. Results from the research will be presented and discussed at a meeting of experts in the field in August 2007, and a final report will be available in the fall of 2007. This project is supported by funds from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Postsecondary Achievement of CTE Students in Dual Enrollment: An Analysis of Two States

Dual enrollment programs are an increasingly popular strategy for encouraging student success in postsecondary education. Given their growth and the resources that states, localities, and institutions are investing in dual enrollment programs, it is vital to determine whether they actually achieve the outcomes intended. Moreover, as a wider range of students—including career and technical education (CTE) students—participate in dual enrollment and as dual enrollment becomes integrated into CTE models, it is necessary to explore whether dual enrollment is an effective strategy to prepare CTE students for postsecondary education.

CCRC is using student record data from the State of Florida and from the City University of New York (CUNY) system to investigate the persistence of dual enrollment students in postsecondary education compared to similar peers who do not participate in dual enrollment. CCRC will also investigate the impact of dual enrollment for CTE students as compared to their CTE peers who do not participate in dual enrollment, enabling researchers to evaluate whether this strategy can encourage such students to obtain a postsecondary credential. This study is one of the first to use large-scale datasets to investigate the impact of dual enrollment on students' postsecondary outcomes, and the first to investigate the impact of dual enrollment for CTE students.

Preliminary results from New York City are encouraging. Students from 19 vocational high schools who subsequently enrolled in a CUNY college, and who took at least one College Now course while in high school, were more likely to obtain positive outcomes than their classmates who enrolled in CUNY but did not participate in College Now. In particular, College Now participants were more likely to pursue a bachelor's degree, had higher first-semester grade point averages, and earned more credits during their first three and a half years of postsecondary education. CCRC is currently running similar analyses for the Florida dataset.

This project is funded by the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. A final report will be available in June 2007.

The National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education Program

In response to the 1992 Scientific and Advanced Technology Act (SATA), the National Science Foundation (NSF) initiated the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program to promote systemic reform of the nation's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. It sought to expand the pool of skilled technicians in advanced technology fields and to increase the quality of technical and scientific education in order to boost the nation's productivity and competitiveness in these areas. The Act gave community colleges the central role for implementation of the ATE program.

In a previous three-year study funded by NSF, CCRC examined issues of institutionalization and sustainability at six ATE projects and four national centers. That research focused on the potential of ATE projects and national centers to exert significant and lasting influence on host colleges and on the system of STEM education, especially after program funding is reduced.

CCRC's current study, also funded by NSF, builds on that research. The current study, which began in fall 2003 and is now nearing completion, focuses on the unique nature of ATE *regional centers* and their ability to initiate institutional change in the delivery of technical education at community colleges. The research included site visits and interviews at six regional centers (as well as two national centers that function as regional centers) distributed across the U.S. and found that regional centers are indeed viable and useful for the NSF ATE program. Regional centers tend to focus on one of two priorities—either providing technically oriented workshops to large numbers of faculty so as to reach greater numbers of students or developing new curricula and pedagogy to improve student outcomes. The study also found that connections forged with other educational sectors, with industry, and with state and local economic development efforts are distinctive to the ATE regional center model and appear to support the success of individual college programs. A report of this study will be available in spring 2007.

Automotive Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative

The Automotive Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative (AMTEC) is a consortium of 15 community colleges in seven states that is committed to the development and dissemination of exemplary technology training for skilled trades and technicians in the automotive and automotive supply industries. Over a two-year period, CCRC is studying how effectively AMTEC responds to the technical skills needs of automotive companies that participate in the collaborative, and the extent to which this diverse set of community colleges can develop an educational program that is useful for the automotive industry as a whole. CCRC will issue a final report in July 2008. This research is being funded by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, which is the principal investigator of this National Science Foundation funded collaborative.

Postsecondary Content Area Reading-Writing Intervention: Development and Determination of Potential Efficacy

This project is an intervention study that develops and tests the potential efficacy of an instructional approach to help community college developmental education students prepare for the reading and writing demands of courses in science and other areas. The project is funded wholly by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of \$1,168,758 over the three-year period beginning June 1, 2006. The initial site is Bronx Community College of the City University of New York, where CCRC personnel and project consultants are collaborating with a panel of reading, English, and science instructors to develop and administer the intervention.

The intervention is the Content Comprehension Strategy Intervention (CCSI), a self-directed curricular supplement that provides guided practice in reading comprehension and writing skills using text from science textbooks and other college-level materials. CCSI focuses on written summarization, clarification of information and generation of questions based on college-level expository text; provides preparation for reading and writing tests that students must pass to exit remediation; and teaches for generalization of skill. The primary research methodology is randomized assignment with control groups, supplemented by interviews. Reports based on this research will become available in 2008.

Study of the Virtual Enterprises International Program (Pilot Phase)

Through CCRC's umbrella organization, the Institute on Education and the Economy, researchers are conducting a study of the New York City Department of Education's Virtual Enterprises International program. Virtual Enterprises (VE) represents a well-established approach to teaching high school students about business through task-oriented and hands-on coursework. VE students, with the assistance of a course instructor and business mentors, oversee a virtual corporation, enabling them to learn about careers, develop interpersonal and organizational skills, use technology, and gain in-depth knowledge about one particular type of business.

This pilot study, carried out in collaboration with VE staff and supported by funds from Merrill Lynch and Citigroup, will begin to document a range

of possible benefits to participating students. Researchers are visiting VE firms in ten high schools and exploring the program's content. They will administer an end-of-year student survey that asks students to compare the program with their other, non-VE courses and programs, and to describe what they see as the VE program's unique characteristics. The researchers will also examine data the program already collects, such as a pre- and post-test and individual firm reports. A report, to be completed by summer 2007, will provide a deep description of the program features, with suggestive conclusions on the relative effectiveness of various aspects of the program, such as using technology, learning business skills, and engaging in teamwork. Additional research using a comparison group of students to better measure the impact of the program is a possibility for the future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CCRC Releases New Book:

Defending the Community College Equity Agenda

Editors: Thomas R. Bailey and Vanessa Smith Morest.

Contributing authors: Thomas R. Bailey, Kerry Charron, Rebecca D. Cox, Kevin J. Dougherty, W. Norton Grubb, Esther Hong, James Jacobs, Melinda Mechur Karp, Vanessa Smith Morest, and Dolores Perin.

CCRC's new collected volume examines the economic, political, and social challenges that have made it increasingly difficult for two-year institutions, despite the commitment and dedicated work of their faculty and staff, to ensure that all students have an equal shot at college preparation, access, and success. Central to these challenges is the decline in state funding, which has not only caused an increase in tuition rates for students, but has also made it difficult for colleges to maintain the teaching and services necessary for their growing and increasingly diverse student bodies.

The findings of the book are based on CCRC's National Field Study of Community Colleges, which involved extensive fieldwork at 15 community colleges in six regionally diverse states (California, Washington, Texas, Illinois, Florida, and New York). Researchers from CCRC collaborated in conducting

over 400 interviews with more than 600 community college administrators, faculty, and students at the 15 colleges.

The book includes chapters on trends that could potentially complicate the colleges' equity agenda. The chapter on community college missions, by Vanessa Smith Morest, asks whether the diverse missions of the colleges weaken their focus on promoting educational success for low-income students. The chapter by Kevin J. Dougherty and Esther Hong examines the accountability movement and explores whether it has improved college performance and whether it has made colleges more reluctant to recruit and work with more difficult-to-serve students. Thomas R. Bailey asks similar questions about the apparently growing competition from for-profit colleges. James Jacobs and W. Norton Grubb analyze the growth of the industry certification, especially in information technology, and ask whether this has threatened community college occupational programs or limited access of low-income community college students to those programs. Rebecca D. Cox asks what effect the growth of online education has had on community colleges and how it has influenced their work with students with weak academic skills.

In light of these trends, *Defending the Community College Equity Agenda* also explores some of the services and programs designed to help students overcome the barriers that they face. Thus, Dolores Perin and Kerry Charron explore the characteristics and effectiveness of the many different remediation approaches that community colleges use to strengthen the academic skills of their students, and W. Norton Grubb analyzes the diverse strategies used to provide student support services. Vanessa Smith Morest and Melinda Mechur Karp's chapter studies the rapid growth of dual enrollment—a practice in which high school students can simultaneously earn high school and college credit. They are particularly interested in attempts to use dual enrollment to strengthen college preparation and thereby promote college success for a broader group of students who, in the past, did not enroll in advanced courses while in high school. These authors conclude that there is a wide, perhaps even bewildering, variety of practices in all of these areas. While there are indeed many excellent programs, in many cases they are poorly coordinated, and college faculty and administrators often do not have a clear sense of which are most effective.

This book suggests that community colleges continue to face profound barriers in fulfilling the

goals of their equity agenda. The authors of this book hope that it can help colleges in their efforts to better understand and improve the work that they do with low-income and first generation students, students of color, and indeed all of their students.

Defending the Community College Equity Agenda (ISBN 0-8018-8447-0, hardcover, \$45), published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, is available from the Hopkins Fulfillment Service at 1-800-537-5487 or by visiting www.press.jhu.edu (mention or enter the code NAF to receive a 20% discount).

Partners and Supporters Gather to Launch the National Center for Postsecondary Research

On October 11, 2006, about 100 people gathered at Teachers College, Columbia University, to celebrate the launch of the National Center for Postsecondary Research (NCPR). The center was created through a five-year federal grant awarded to the Community College Research Center (CCRC) and its partners at MDRC; the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia; and professors at Harvard and Princeton Universities. The theme of the event, *Using Research to Strengthen Equity, Access, and Student Achievement in Higher Education*, reflected the purpose of the center—to rigorously examine higher education practice and policy in order to improve postsecondary educational access and success for all students.



Pictured above on left (clockwise, top left to bottom left): Thomas Brock (MDRC), David Breneman (The Curry School of Education, UVA), Thomas R. Bailey (CCRC, Teachers College), Robert Ivry (MDRC), Susan Fuhrman (Teachers College), Patricia Windham (Division of Community Colleges, Florida Department of Education), Diane Troyer (Cy-Fair College), Regina Peruggi (Kingsborough Community College), and Bridget Terry Long (Graduate School of Education, Harvard University.)

The kickoff event featured a panel presentation by NCPD partners and associates, and was followed by a reception with poster sessions on core research areas. After introductory remarks by Dr. Susan Fuhrman, president of Teachers College, Dr. Thomas Bailey, director of CCRC and NCPD, provided an overview of NCPD and its research agenda. Dr. Bailey's remarks were followed by presentations on the main topics to be examined by NCPD over the next five years. Dr. David Breneman, dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, emphasized the importance of conducting research at community colleges, given that half of the U.S. student body attends these two-year institutions. Dr. Regina Peruggi, president of Kingsborough Community College, explained how learning communities have contributed to student achievement at her institution. Dr. Patricia Windham, associate vice chancellor for the Division of Community Colleges at the Florida Department of Education, discussed the impact that dual enrollment programs have had in Florida. Dr. Bridget Terry Long, associate professor at Harvard University and an NCPD research affiliate, discussed the value of using state data collection systems in quantitative analyses.

For more information on NCPD, please visit our new website at <http://www.PostsecondaryResearch.org>. See also the description of NCPD research on page 4.

UPCOMING CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

League for Innovation in the Community College

10th Annual Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana
March 4-7, 2007

The Practice of Defending the Community College Equity Agenda

Sunday, March 4, 2007, 2:30-3:30 PM
Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Grand Salon 6, First Floor

Session Participants:

James Jacobs, Associate Director, CCRC
Thomas Bailey, Director, CCRC
Vanessa Smith Mores, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, Norwalk Community College
Kay McClenney, Director, Community College Survey of Student Engagement, University of Texas at Austin
Christine Johnson McPhail, Professor and Coordinator, Community College Leadership Doctoral Program, Morgan State University

Beyond the First Step: Strategies for Building Comprehensive Career Pathways for Low-Skill Adults

Monday, March 5, 2007, 3:00-4:00 PM
Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Belle Chasse, Third Floor

Session Participants:

Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC
Tina Bloomer, Director, Student Achievement Project, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
Jon Kerr, Director of Integrated Basic Skills, Pierce College District
Alice Madsen, Dean of Instruction for Professional/Technical Education, Highline Community College

Meeting Our Mission: Who Attends Community and Technical College

Tuesday, March 6, 2007, 12:15-1:15 PM
Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Grand Salon 15, First Floor

Session Participants:

James Jacobs, Associate Director, CCRC
Tina Bloomer, Director, Student Achievement Project, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
Maureen Pettitt, Director of Institutional Research, Skagit Valley College

Please visit
CCRC Booth #101
at the
10th Annual Innovations Conference
March 4-7, 2007
Hilton New Orleans Riverside

American Educational Research Association

2007 Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois
April 9-13, 2007

Are Institutional Graduation Rates Valid Measures of Community College Performance?

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

Session Participants:

Clifford Adelman, Senior Associate, Institute for Higher Education Policy
Thomas Bailey, Director, CCRC
Laura Horn, Co-Director, Statistical Analysis and Data Design, MPR Associates
Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC

Dual Enrollment as a Strategy for Postsecondary Success

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

Session Participants:

Katherine Hughes, Assistant Director, CCRC
 Melinda Mechur Karp, Senior Research Associate, CCRC
 Heather Wathington, Assistant Professor, The Curry School of Education, University of Virginia
 Juan Carlos Calcagno, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC

Implications of the Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education: The Challenges of Assessing Quality in Postsecondary Education

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

Session Participants:

Rachelle Brooks, Director, College Sports Project Center for Data Collection and Analysis, Northwestern University
 Estela Bensimon, Director, Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California
 Kevin Carey, Research and Policy Manager, The Education Sector
 Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC
 Bridget Terry Long, Associate Professor of Education and Economics, Harvard Graduate School of Education
 Kate Shaw, Associate Professor of Urban Education, Temple University

Learning Communities as a Strategy for the Postsecondary Success of Underprepared Students: The Latest Research

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

Session Participants:

Thomas Bailey, Director, CCRC
 Bridget Terry Long, Associate Professor of Education and Economics, Harvard Graduate School of Education
 Emily Lardner, Co-Director, Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, Evergreen State College
 Gillies Malnarich, Co-Director, Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, Evergreen State College
 Vincent Tinto, Distinguished University Professor, Syracuse University School of Education
 Cathy McHugh Engstrom, Associate Professor, Syracuse University School of Education
 Thomas Brock, Director, Young Adults and Postsecondary Education, MDRC

Predicting Community College Content-Area Course Performance from Academic Skill Level, Demographic Variables, and Educational Background

Time: TBA

Location: TBA

Session Participants:

Miriam Goldstein, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia Presbyterian Hospital
 Dolores Perin, Senior Research Associate, CCRC

American Association of Community Colleges

87th Annual Convention, Tampa, Florida
 April 14-17, 2007

The Practice of Defending the Community College Equity Agenda

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 8:45–9:45 AM

Location: TBA

Session Participants:

Thomas Bailey, Director, CCRC
 James Jacobs, Associate Director, CCRC
 Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC
 Eduardo Marti, President, Queensborough Community College

Forging State Policy for Dual Enrollment: The Role of Community Colleges

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 10:00–11:00 AM

Location: TBA

Session Participants:

Katherine Hughes, Assistant Director, CCRC
 John Austin, Vice President, Michigan Board of Education
 Daniel Phelan, President, Jackson Community College

Improving Persistence: Students' Views and Institutional Supports at Two Colleges

Monday, April 16, 2007, 1:45–2:45 PM

Location: TBA

Session Participants:

Katherine Hughes, Assistant Director, CCRC
 David Levinson, President, Norwalk Community College
 Paula Adelhoch, Dean of Student Affairs, Hudson Community College

Join our researchers, staff,
and affiliates at the

CCRC

and

National Center for
Postsecondary Research

Open Reception

at the

87th AACC Annual Convention
 Sunday, April 15, 2007

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Marriott Tampa Waterside Hotel
 Meeting Room 11

See you there!

**Association for Institutional Research
2007 Annual Forum, Kansas City, Missouri
June 2-6, 2007**

**Creating a Culture of Evidence to Drive Improvement
in Student Outcomes and Institutional Effectiveness at
Community Colleges**

Monday, June 4, 2007, 3:10–4:50 PM
Hyatt Crown Center, Chouteau B, Mezzanine Level
Session Participants:

Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC
Thomas Bailey, Director, CCRC
Patricia Windham, Associate Vice Chancellor for
Evaluation, Florida Community College System
Joanne Bashford, Associate Provost for Institutional
Effectiveness, Miami Dade College

**Community College Remedial Courses: Lots of
Students Take Them, But Do They Work?**

Tuesday, June 5, 2007, 3:00–3:40 PM
Westin Crown Center, Mission, Ballroom Level
Session Participants:

Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC
Patricia Windham, Associate Vice Chancellor for
Evaluation, Florida Community College System
Juan Carlos Calcagno, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC

Please check CCRC's website for conference details and
updates: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu>.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

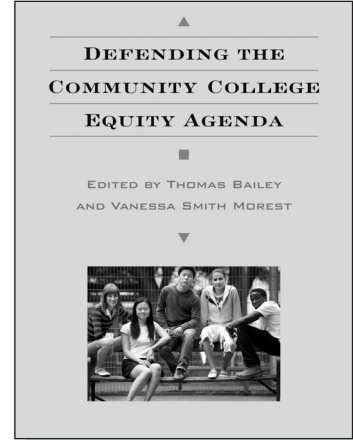
BOOKS AND EDITED JOURNALS

**Defending the Community College Equity
Agenda**

*Edited by Thomas
R. Bailey and
Vanessa Smith
Morest.*

*Contributing
authors: Thomas R.
Bailey, Kerry
Charron, Rebecca
D. Cox, Kevin J.
Dougherty, W.
Norton Grubb,
Esther Hong,
James Jacobs,
Melinda Mechur
Karp, Vanessa*

*Smith Morest and Dolores Perin. Johns Hopkins
University Press, 2006.*



Based on case studies of 15 colleges in New York, Texas, Florida, California, Washington, and Illinois as well as data from the National Center for Education Statistics, this edited volume examines the challenges currently facing community colleges. The authors analyze how recent developments, such as falling state budgets combined with growing enrollments and a greater emphasis on outcome-based accountability, impact the community college and its mission of educational opportunity, especially for low-income students, students of color, and other underserved groups. See also the description on page 8.

**Community College Missions in the 21st
Century**

*Edited by Barbara K. Townsend and Kevin J.
Dougherty. New Directions for Community Colleges
No. 136, Jossey-Bass, Winter 2006.*

Changing demographic, economic, and social pressures repeatedly splinter and reform individual community colleges' emphases on different institutional missions and their expression in college functions. This volume examines the internal and external forces that shape institutional purposes and activities, and it explores the tensions that arise between community colleges' overarching societal missions and the specific activities in which they engage.

REPORTS AND PAPERS

What Can Student Right-to-Know Graduation Rates Tell Us About Community College Performance?

Thomas R. Bailey, Peter M. Crosta, and Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper, in press.

Student Right-to-Know (SRK) graduation rates are the only performance measures available for every undergraduate institution in the United States. Community college educators often argue that the SRK rates give an inaccurate picture of community college outcomes. Using data from national longitudinal surveys of college students, this paper analyzes the validity of SRK rates and examines criticisms commonly leveled against the measures.

Institutional Responses to State Merit Aid Programs: Unintended Consequences in Florida Community Colleges

Juan Carlos Calcagno and Mariana Alfonso. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper, in press.

By using the introduction of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program as a natural experiment, CCRC researchers estimated the effects of a state merit aid program on community colleges. This paper examines the effects of the program in terms of institutional aid, tuition pricing, and as a re-sorting mechanism for high ability students.

Remediation in the Community College: An Evaluator's Perspective

Henry M. Levin and Juan Carlos Calcagno. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper, in press.

Remediation is the most common policy designed to prepare students academically and socially during the early stages of college. Based on previous literature, this paper proposes a list of ingredients for successful remedial interventions, discusses alternative research designs for systematic evaluations, and enumerates the basic data requirements for such research.

Promoting Academic Momentum at Community Colleges: Challenges and Opportunities

Sara Goldrick-Rab. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 5, February 2007.

Policymakers and practitioners face significant challenges in their efforts to promote academic

momentum toward postsecondary credentials among community college students. This paper is a literature review that locates the sources of these challenges both in student characteristics and in state and institutional practices and policies. It also examines empirical research to identify opportunities for improvement.

Achieving the Dream in Ohio: State Policies Affecting Access to, and Success in, Community Colleges for Students of Color and Low-Income Students

Kevin J. Dougherty, James W. Marshall, and Andrea Soonachan. Community College Research Center, November 2006.

This report provides an audit of state policies in Ohio affecting access to, and success in, community colleges for students of color and low-income students.

Achieving the Dream in Connecticut: State Policies Affecting Access to, and Success in, Community Colleges for Students of Color and Low-Income Students

Kevin J. Dougherty and Monica Reid. Community College Research Center, November 2006.

This report provides an audit of state policies in Connecticut affecting access to, and success in, community colleges for students of color and low-income students.

Stepping Stones to a Degree: The Impact of Enrollment Pathways and Milestones on Community College Student Outcomes

Juan Carlos Calcagno, Peter M. Crosta, Thomas R. Bailey, and Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 4, October 2006.

This paper presents findings from a study of the experiences and outcomes of community college students. CCRC researchers developed a discrete-time hazard model using longitudinal transcript data on a cohort of first-time community college students in Florida to compare the impact of enrollment pathways (such as remediation) and enrollment milestones (such as attaining a certain number of credits) on educational outcomes of older students with those of traditional-age students.

What Community College Management Practices Are Effective in Promoting Student Success? A Study of High- and Low-Impact Institutions

Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center, updated October 2006.

This report seeks to identify policies and practices of community colleges that are effective in enabling their students to succeed in postsecondary education. It is based on earlier CCRC research using national survey data. CCRC researchers used transcript-level data on 150,000 students in three cohorts of first-time Florida community college students and a regression methodology to estimate the effect that each of Florida’s 28 community colleges had on the probability that its students would achieve a successful outcome, after controlling for characteristics of the individual students. This effect can be seen as a measure of value added—the impact that a college has on its students’ educational success independent of the characteristics of individual students.

Is Student Success Labeled Institutional Failure? Student Goals and Graduation Rates in the Accountability Debate at Community Colleges

Thomas R. Bailey, D. Timothy Leinbach, and Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 1, updated September 2006.

This paper explores the impact of students’ reasons for enrollment and educational expectations on their outcomes and, thus, on the performance of their colleges, showing that community college students with degree and transfer goals are more likely to graduate or transfer. Still, an analysis suggests that even among students who state that their goal is a degree, certificate, or transfer, fewer than 50 percent achieve that goal within six years.

Using Census Data to Classify Community College Students by Socioeconomic Status and Community Characteristics

Peter M. Crosta, D. Timothy Leinbach, and Davis Jenkins, with David Prince and Doug Whittaker. Community College Research Center, CCRC Research Tools, No. 1, July 2006.

Colleges and state higher education agencies too often lack accurate information about the socioeconomic status (SES) of their students. This paper describes the methodology that

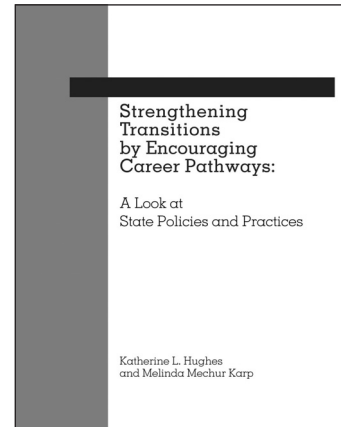
CCRC researchers used to estimate the SES of individual students in the Washington State community and technical college system using SES descriptors from the Census information on their geographic area of residence.

Strengthening Transitions by Encouraging Career Pathways: A Look at State Policies and Practices

Katherine L. Hughes and Melinda Mechur Karp. American Association of Community Colleges and League for Innovation in the Community College, January 2006.

This report identifies the ways that state policies can support students’ academic

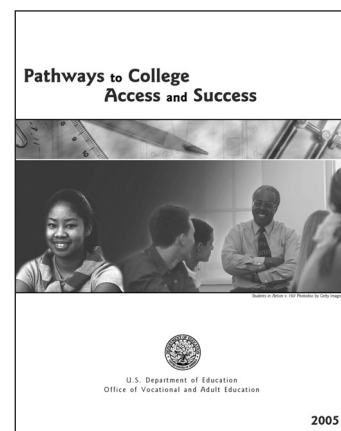
and workforce success by creating coherent systems of preparation for students entering technical fields. In particular, the report focuses on state policies that promote the implementation of career pathways, such as those encouraged by the U.S. Department of Education’s College and Career Transitions Initiative, which span secondary and postsecondary education and culminate in rewarding careers.



Pathways to College Access and Success

Katherine L. Hughes, Melinda Mechur Karp, Baranda Fermin and Thomas R. Bailey. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, October 2005.

In the past, credit-based transition programs enrolled primarily academically proficient and high-achieving students. Today, a growing number of policymakers, education reform groups, and researchers argue that middle- and even low-achieving high school students may benefit from dual enrollment in high



school and college. CCRC researchers examine five programs to understand how credit-based transition programs can help middle- and low-achieving students enter and succeed in college.

Community College Student Success: What Institutional Characteristics Make a Difference?

Thomas R. Bailey, Juan Carlos Calcagno, Davis Jenkins, Gregory S. Kienzl, and D. Timothy Leinbach. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 3, October 2005.

This paper, a follow-up to the research in CCRC's Working Paper No. 2, incorporates individual student data into the model of institutional characteristics that affect student outcomes. By using individual and institutional level data, CCRC researchers address two methodological challenges associated with research on community college student outcomes: unobserved institutional effects and attendance at multiple institutions.

Update to State Dual Enrollment Policies: Addressing Access and Quality

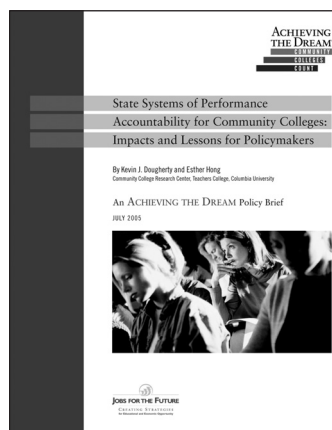
Katherine L. Hughes, Melinda Mechur Karp, Baranda Fermin, and Thomas R. Bailey. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, September 2005.

This paper is an important update to CCRC's 2004 report, *State Dual Enrollment Policies: Addressing Access and Quality*, which analyzed dual enrollment legislation in all 50 states and examined whether these policies promote or inhibit the spread of dual enrollment programs. The update provides additional information on the state policies.

State Systems of Performance Accountability for Community Colleges: Impacts and Lessons for Policymakers

Kevin J. Dougherty and Esther Hong. Jobs for the Future and Lumina Foundation for Education, July 2005.

This policy brief, drawing on the experiences of the 15 community colleges in six states in



CCRC's National Field Study of Community Colleges, presents an analysis of the intended and unintended impacts of performance accountability on community colleges. Specifically, CCRC researchers compare measures such as graduation rates in states that base college funding on student performance with states that only require performance reporting.

Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Statewide Longitudinal Tracking Study

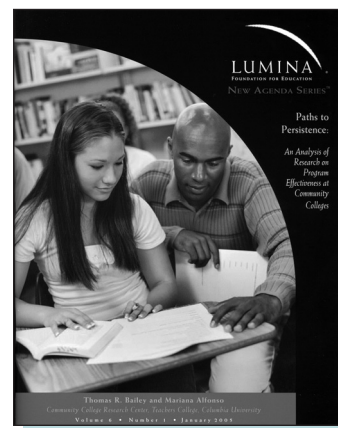
David Prince and Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center, April 2005.

This paper presents findings from a study on the experience and outcomes of low-skill adults in community colleges. CCRC researchers use student record information from the Washington State Community and Technical College System to track the progress of two cohorts of adult students with, at most, a high school education. The study examines the educational attainment of the students to identify the roadblocks and critical points at which adult students drop out or fail to advance to the next level.

Paths to Persistence: An Analysis of Research on Program Effectiveness at Community Colleges

Thomas R. Bailey and Mariana Alfonso. Lumina Foundation for Education, New Agenda Series 6(1), January 2005.

This monograph presents a critical analysis of the state of the research on the effectiveness of specific practices to increase persistence and completion at community colleges. Taking account of substantive lessons learned about effective institutional practices, CCRC researchers identify promising areas for future research, evaluate the state of program-effectiveness research at community colleges, and make recommendations for improving related research.



COMING SOON!

Forthcoming reports prepared for the Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count initiative:

- **Institutional Research and the Culture of Evidence at Community Colleges**
- **Institutional Transformation in Higher Education: Achieving the Dream in Comparative Context**
- **Fifty States of Achieving the Dream: State Policies To Enhance Access to and Success in Community Colleges across the United States**

Orr, M. T., Bailey, T. R., Hughes, K. L., Kienzl, G. S., & Karp, M. M. (2007). The National Academy Foundation's Career Academies: Shaping postsecondary transitions. In D. Neumark (Ed.), *Improving school-to-work transitions* (pp. 169-209). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Perin, D. (September 2006). Academic progress of community college nursing aspirants: An institutional research profile. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30(8), 657-670.

Shaw, K. M., & Bailey, T. (2007). Can access to community colleges for low-income adults be improved? Testing a model of the policy change process across six diverse states. In K. M. Shaw & D. E. Heller (Eds.), *State postsecondary education research: New methods to inform policy and practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Alfonso, M. (December 2006). The impact of community college attendance on baccalaureate attainment. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(8).

Calcagno, J. C., Crosta, P., Bailey, T. R., & Jenkins, D. (November 2007). Stepping stones to a degree: The impact of enrollment pathways and milestones on community college student outcomes. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(7).

Dougherty, K. J., & Townsend, B. K. (Winter 2006). Community college missions: A theoretical and historical perspective. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2006(136), 5-13.

Dougherty, K. J., Reid, M., & Nienhusser, H. K. (October/November 2006). Helping students enter and succeed: Access, success, and accountability policies in the "Achieving the Dream" states. *Community College Journal*, 77(2), 42-47.

Jacobs, J. (December 2006/January 2007). Income equity and workforce development: Balancing the earnings scale. *Community College Journal*, 77(3), 22-24.

Jacobs, J., & Dougherty, K. J. (Winter 2006). The uncertain future of the community college workforce development mission. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2006(136), 53-62.

Jacobs, J. & Voorhees, R. A. (Spring 2006). The community college as a nexus for workforce transitions: A critical essay. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 13(2), 133-139.

CCRC Currents

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CCRC was established in 1996 by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and is housed at the Institute on Education and the Economy (IEE) at Teachers College, Columbia University. The continued generosity of the Sloan Foundation and support from other foundations and federal agencies make the work of CCRC possible.