

# Practices to boost community college student completion rates identified in report

September 24 2014

---

A new report from The University of Texas at Austin's Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) reveals a positive relationship between community colleges' implementation of several "high impact" practices—like offering supplemental instruction and creating learning communities—and students' completion of developmental courses and persistence from semester to semester.

"A Matter of Degrees: Practices to Pathways" is the third, and last, in a [series of annual reports](#) released by the CCCSE. Because research indicates that only 54 percent of students starting at two-year public colleges had earned a degree or certificate or were still enrolled in college six years later, the reports have focused on giving colleges practical, proven ways of reversing low completion rates.

For these reports, the center used data from two national surveys that it administers to identify effective strategies for boosting community college [student success](#) rates.

The [report](#) comes amid national discussion about improving accessibility, affordability and success rates in higher education.

"In the first report we described 13 high impact practices, like offering tutoring and helping students with academic goal setting and planning, that [community colleges](#) can adopt to improve students' academic outcomes," said Evelyn Waiwaiole, CCCSE director. "The second report focused on notable differences in engagement between students who

participate in those high impact practices and those who don't."

Highlights from the most recent report include:

- Clearly stated attendance policies made a big difference; developmental math students were three times more likely to stick with a class when the instructor explained the attendance policies.
- Developmental students were four times more likely to successfully complete a gatekeeper (introductory college credit class) English course if they had participated in a student success course that taught them specific skills such as studying and test-taking.
- Students who registered for all of their courses before the first class session were four times more likely to persist from fall to spring and 11 times more likely to persist from fall to fall.

In this third report the researchers also looked at five structured group practices that colleges can use: first-year experiences, student success courses, fast-track developmental education, orientation, and learning communities.

They found that when students participate in more than one structured group learning experience, the odds improve that they will complete developmental math and/or English and a gatekeeper course with a C or better.

"The more of these engaging, high impact practices that a student can experience, the more likely it is that he or she will reach key academic milestones," said Waiwaiole. "Research and college practice suggest that [students](#) are more successful when institutions adjust their academic model so that these high impact practices are intentionally integrated into established educational pathways."

Provided by University of Texas at Austin

Citation: Practices to boost community college student completion rates identified in report (2014, September 24) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-09-boost-college-student.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.