



# GATEWAY TO INNOVATIONS

for Student Development in Community Colleges

Summary Report of the Fifth Annual Conference of the  
National Council on Student Development

St. Louis, Missouri  
October 2003

Edited by  
**Dr. Charlene Dukes & Dr. Eleanor Brown**

**ACT**  
**ncsd** NATIONAL COUNCIL  
ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

an affiliate council of the american association of community colleges

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*National Council on Student Development*

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# Acknowledgments

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DAVID PIERCE

Executive Director, National Office  
National Council on Student Development

More than 120 professionals from around the United States and Canada attended the 2003 annual conference of the National Council on Student Development, entitled *Gateway to Innovations for Student Development in Community Colleges*. It was fitting to hold this conference in St. Louis, Missouri—the Gateway to the West. This yearly gathering continues to provide the opportunity for professionals to converge in one place and discuss the very important topics associated with educating students for the 21st century and beyond. The dialogue allows committed student development practitioners to learn from the most innovative, creative, and best practices gleaned from more than 1100 community colleges on the continent.

As noted in past years, the success of this annual event is the result of the contributions of many. NCSD again extends its most sincere appreciation to Dr. James Kellerman, CEO and Executive Director of the Missouri Community College Association, who provided remarks at the opening plenary session. NCSD thanks Rod Risley, Executive Director of Phi Theta Kappa, who closed our conference by acknowledging the success of our thousands of graduates and alums of community colleges. NCSD is grateful for the individuals and groups who competed for the Terry O'Banion Shared Journey Awards and made presentations that highlighted their on-going commitment to programmatic excellence.

We acknowledge the extraordinary contributions of our host, St. Louis Community College and its chancellor, Dr. Henry Shannon. Our gratitude extends to Dr. Rosemary Woolley and her staff, who oversaw local arrangements and went to great lengths to ensure that all in attendance enjoyed the conference and the local sights.

Special thanks go to our corporate sponsors who assisted us in so many ways. Those sponsors include:

ACT  
500 ACT Drive  
P.O. Box 168  
Iowa City, IA 52243-0168  
For printing the summary of the annual  
NCSD conference.

Elliott Data Systems  
460 A Sovereign Court  
St. Louis, MO 63011  
For developing and printing the 2003  
conference name badges.

League for Innovation in the  
Community College  
4505 E. Chandler Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85048  
For sponsoring the Terry O'Banion  
Shared Journey Awards reception and  
banquet.

Missouri Community College  
Association  
200 East McCarty St., Suite 100  
Jefferson City, MO 65101  
For sponsoring the Community College  
Student Development Leadership  
Institute breaks.

Noel-Levitz  
2101 ACT Circle  
Iowa City, IA 52245  
For providing conference bags and  
contributing to conference breaks.

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society  
1625 Eastover Drive  
Jackson, MS 39211  
For sponsoring the conference welcome  
reception.

St. Louis Community College  
300 South Broadway  
St. Louis, MO 63102-2810  
For the Chancellor's reception, the  
Institute graduation luncheon, and  
various materials and supplies.

The Board of Directors is eternally grateful to John Roth and everyone else at ACT who continue to support the development and publication of our yearly monographs. Without their assistance and commitment, the recordings of this and past proceedings would not exist.

Kudos and appreciation go to each of the authors who contributed to the materials contained in the monograph. By following a standard format, we hope that the salient points are captured, making it easily accessible to readers.

Lastly, we wish to thank the participants, without whom a conference is just words on a document. It is your participation, your energy, your thought-provoking questions and comments, and your commitment to the profession that made this gathering successful. We look forward to seeing you in Orlando, Florida, in 2004.

Current members of NCSD receive copies of this publication free of charge. Others may purchase copies from:

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## Conference Overview

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CHARLENE DUKES

Prince George's Community College (MD)

ELEANOR BROWN

Pima Community College (AZ)

The fifth annual conference of the National Council on Student Development convened at the St. Louis Sheraton City Center in St. Louis, Missouri, from October 19–22, 2003. Meeting in a city so vital to the migratory patterns of the American past provided much sought after stimulation as professionals celebrated the future of student development in North America's community colleges. The Arch reminded us of the paths we need to take and the bridges we need to build and sustain to support the educational success of the millions of students who begin their journey in our community college systems. The graciousness of our hosts, St. Louis Community College, helped to ensure a successful conference for all in attendance. We especially want to thank Dr. Rosemary Woolley, Philishea Ingram, Charles Koehler, and Gelaine Williams for their support of the conference and the students representing the Student Government Associations and Phi Theta Kappa who served as hosts and hostesses.

The conference opened with words of welcome from Dr. Evelyn Clements, President of NCSO, followed by remarks from Dr. David Pierce, Executive Director of the National Council on Student Development. Professor Donna Spaulding, coordinator of Staff Development and Faculty in the Theatre and Speech Department urged us in song to "Meet Me in St. Louis." The audience complied by joining in on the chorus. Dr. Henry Shannon, Chancellor at St. Louis Community College and President-elect of the American Association of Community College brought greetings on behalf of the college and the national association. Dr. James Kellerman, CEO and Executive Director of the Missouri Community College Association, delivered an inspiring address before participants convened in Hot Topic Sessions that addressed Counseling, Doing More with Less, Technology in Student Services, and Developmental Education.

The remainder of the conference included a series of concurrent presentations that competed for the Fifth Annual Shared Journey Awards, in honor of Terry O'Banion, past president of the League for Innovation and a strong supporter of NCSO and its mission. These presenters are chosen from among sessions previously presented at recent meetings of the League, NASPA, ASCD, and ACPA, among others, including NCSO regional conferences and the NCSO Exemplary Practice Awards. From these finalists, a panel of judges drawn from the NCSO Board of Directors chooses the three winners.

Presentations from competition finalists included 19 presenters representing 11 community colleges across the United States. The Shared Journey First Place Award went to Joann Wright, Carolyn Manley, and David Taylor of Moraine Valley

Community College (IL) for *The First-Semester Student Experience*. Second Place was awarded to Florence Sheils, Wanda Haynes, and Voncille Wright of Manchester Community College (CT) for *Summer Bridge Programs 101: The Glories and the Agonies*. Third place went to Jadi Johnson of Tomball College and Cy-Fair College (TX) for *Camp "Of Course You Can."* Additionally, Dr. Richard Robertson received the 2003 Achievement of Excellence Award and Camilla Bishop received the 2003 Dissertation of the Year Award from NCSD.

During the closing session, Rod Risley, CEO and Executive Director of Phi Theta Kappa, provided remarks focusing on building leadership. Those remarks were followed by a panel entitled "*From Alums to Leaders: Building Our Future.*" Dr. Norman Myers, Founding President of Ozarks Technical College in Branson, Missouri, moderated the panel. Joining him on the panel were Dr. Evelyn Jorgenson, who received her Associate in Arts degree from State Fair Community College and is currently president of Moberly Area Community College; Senator Bill Foster, a Republican who represents six counties in the Missouri Senate and attended St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, but received his associate degree in industrial management from the Milwaukee School of Engineering; and Chief Sherman George, the Fire Commissioner and Chief for the City of St. Louis Fire Department, who attended St. Louis Community College at Forest Park before earning his Bachelor of Science degree from Central Missouri State University.

The conference attendees were provided tours of the campuses of St. Louis Community College, as well as opportunities to visit numerous historical sites around the city. This conference continues to be the only one devoted to an audience of professionals who work and serve students in the field of student development in community colleges.

# Opening Plenary: A Call to Leadership

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## Keynote Speaker

DR. JAMES KELLERMAN  
CEO and Executive Director  
Missouri Community College Association

Dr. Kellerman spoke eloquently on the need to serve increased numbers of students with decreased budgets. He urged the participants to reflect on the following questions:

- How can student development maintain high quality services in these tight budget times with \$6.5 million in budget cutbacks?
- How do we think differently now as a college and focus our communication on the people who will actually use the facilities?
- How do we develop opportunities to meet with the users of the facilities and those making the decisions in order to maximize utilization and dollars spent on enhancing the educational experience?

Dr. Kellerman reported that out of these recent state cutbacks came the need for institutions of higher education to streamline, redefine, and become more efficient out of necessity. He provided some interesting concepts and strategies to redefine budget needs for consideration:

- Encourage multi-campus systems to combine services.
- Look for ways to increase student services without additional funding.
- Utilize PC Cameras for Student Services/Counseling for off-site campus locations in order to preserve the personal touch without increasing staff.
- Return to zero based budgeting as a way of justifying institutional needs.
- Consider developing a website to assist the students in supplemental instruction as a way to alleviate some of the requests for tutors.
- Seek matching grants for equipment.
- Use technology to support pressing needs in student services.

Dr. Kellerman cited several ways to use fundraising as a method to increase funding in student services:

- Promote private partnerships as sponsors.
- Plan and conduct innovative fundraising activities for scholarships.
- Sponsor silent auctions as one way to raise money for scholarships.
- Sponsor golf tournaments that can garner about \$10,000 a year.
- Encourage Student Government Associations to spearhead books-to-students projects.
- Consider combining graduation ceremonies at multi-campus systems.
- Evaluate the need for fees and institute those that are critical.
- Engage in strategic discussions that will assist institutions to make those hard decisions in reference to what events are **not** going to happen due to budget cutbacks/withholdings/restraints.

Dr. Kellerman noted that providing academic advising services to students remains a critical need. Advisors and counselors are seeing more students due not just to increased enrollments, but increased needs resulting in the possibility of a “rack ’em and stack ’em” mentality. Legislators continue to suggest that community colleges do not need any additional funding, reasoning that **enrollment is up, therefore, tuition is also up**. In Missouri, \$48 million was provided to the Gallagher Scholarship to support enrollment at private colleges, while \$12 million was allocated to community colleges. To offset decreased funding, Missouri colleges have thought outside of the box and instituted:

- Automatic tuition deferment (30 days into the class session). Students have been financially responsible with 90–95% of tuition deferment payments collected; this allows colleges to serve an extremely needy population.
- Some colleges have combined Financial Aid, Advising, and Counseling into Enrollment Services as a means to leverage staff to assist in critical need areas.

Dr. Kellerman suggested that in Student Services, professionals need to ask and answer these questions, **“What is one plan or initiative you would implement? What would you do if you had the ultimate power to address the situation of ‘More Students/Less Money?’”** Simple answers include:

- Collaborate.
- Realign faculty loads and faculty efficiencies and hold faculty accountable for student retention.
- Implement some **Quality Control Indicators**.
- Stick to the application deadlines.
- Streamline Instant Aid.
- Consolidate all of the academic labs (One Stop Shop).
- Evaluate and update current job descriptions, develop cross-training initiatives for staff, redefine the workday for fall/spring and summer.
- Close the loop on assessment and streamline the process in order to have clearly defined goals and outcomes.

As an addendum to Dr. Kellerman’s remarks, Dr. Henry Shannon provided a description of the assessment process at St. Louis Community College and shared the questions that support that process.

**Listen**, Look, and Learn: **what** did you decide to address in your SLCC Services assessment project?

**Act:** **how** did you assess this Unit/Cluster/District Services concern?

**Another Look:** **what** did you learn from your SLCC Unit/Cluster/District Services assessment project?

**Share the News, first** by sending this report to the Coordinator of Assessment and **then** through various other means, such as sending to your Campus Services Assessment Committee, or publishing in your annual report and your campus site newsletter.

**Improve**, by whatever **means** available/necessary.

**Excel & Celebrate**, by **incorporating** and **refining** improvements.

## **The First-Semester Student Experience**

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### **Moraine Valley Community College (IL)**

CAROLYN MANLEY  
DAVID TAYLOR  
JOANN WRIGHT

Moraine Valley Community College has focused its efforts on placing learning first by recognizing the needs of first-generation college students. The college's commitment to learning college principles is a college-wide effort that focuses all activities, curricula, programs, and services on enhancing student success while promoting lifelong learning. As part of an effort to create holistic processes to enable student success, the college instituted in spring 2000 a unique mandatory program for first-time full-time students, entitled the First-Semester Student Experience. This is a comprehensive, integrated program designed to help students make a successful transition to the college environment and develop the skills needed for college and lifelong success.

The components of the First-Semester Student Experience are (1) college placement testing, (2) student orientation and registration, (3) the COL 101 student success course, and (4) completion of an individualized Master Academic Plan. Outstanding features of the program's design include small information sessions where faculty help students assess college readiness and college expectations, review their placement scores, utilize online academic information and registration tools, and provide individualized assistance with course selection and registration. An additional component is the student success course, designed to provide the learner with an experiential active-learning experience. The course is holistic in nature, providing students the opportunity to learn about themselves as learners, to succeed in higher education, and to learn strategies to repair academic weaknesses while celebrating current strengths. Integrated in the first-semester course is the Master Academic Plan, a process that involves each student developing an individualized career exploration and educational plan.

Success of the First-Semester Student Experience is evident in our students. Research conducted by MVCC's Institutional Research Office over the last three years has documented that students who complete the First-Semester Experience are more likely to continue enrollment to the second semester and second year, earn higher first- and second-semester cumulative grade point averages, and achieve a higher percentage of completion in first and second semester credit hours.

The First-Semester Student Experience touches the daily lives of many individuals at Moraine Valley Community College—both students and staff. During its first three

years, approximately 6,000 students have participated. It is a college-wide innovation implemented and continuously supported by faculty, staff, and administrators.

Instructors of the student success course must participate in a training program. To date, over 175 faculty and staff members have participated in the training, and more than 135 have taught over 235 sections of the course. Co-curricula workshops to support learning outside of the classroom are provided by counselors, academic enrichment staff, and staff in other areas of the college. Academic advisors provide Master Academic Planning sessions for all COL 101 sections, and librarians provide library information sessions. Finally, a significant college commitment was demonstrated by creating a leadership position to organize and facilitate the program components. This position was filled by an official Student Development administrator with close alignment with Academic Affairs personnel.

In 2003 the First-Semester Student Experience was recognized as the Innovation of the Year by Moraine Valley for its impact on promoting student success through learning-centered principles that enhance the learning experiences of students.

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## Summer Bridge Programs 101: The Glories and the Agonies

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### Manchester Community College (CT)

WANDA HAYNES  
FLORENCE SHEILS  
VONCILLE WRIGHT

As an open enrollment, learner-centered institution, Manchester Community College (MCC) is dedicated to providing access to higher education to all who desire it and can benefit. Implemented during the summer of 1999, the Summer Training and Academic Training Services (STARS) Program is designed to provide a quality post-secondary educational opportunity for first-generation, financially disadvantaged and academically underprepared students who are transitioning from secondary school to MCC. The primary goal of the STARS program is to teach first-year students how to self assess their progress towards their academic goals. The students learn how to recognize their needs and how to access assistance that leads to success.

Current research has consistently showed that developmental education is often the pathway to postsecondary education for many first-generation, low-income students. This trend is so noted at MCC. In recent years, based upon the students' results on the **Accuplacer** assessment instrument and a normed essay, 60% to 70% of students have placed into one of three developmental English courses offered at the college. Students placing into the Preparatory College Reading and Writing II or III (Eng 097 or 098) and meeting the other criteria (low income, first generation in college) are invited to participate in the STARS program. Students placing into the level I Eng 093 course were not invited due to the extreme rigor and focus of the program.

The STARS program is the innovative result of collaboration between the MCC's Academic and Student Affairs Divisions. Two years of intensive discussions about how to promote the academic success of first-generation, low-income and underprepared students led to the creation of the three-credit SD102 Bridge to College Success student development course, and the comprehensive STARS program.

Three cohorts of up to seventeen STARS students earn four credits in an intensive six weeks. In addition to the focus on reading, essay writing and study skills, financial aid workshops, career choices exploration, and introductions to Word and WebCT are presented. Monday through Thursday, students interact with each other, faculty members, professional writing tutors, mentors, counselors, and Student Development Specialists, who each lend support for student success. On Fridays, students engage in community service and cultural enrichment activities, and learning experiences in diversity. The intent is to broaden student perspectives in as many ways as possible by encouraging students to open their minds to new experiences and ways of learning.

At the end of the program, continued support and encouragement is provided to students through the Academic Success Program, including an overnight retreat.

Ninety-nine percent of the students consistently state that they would recommend STARS to other students. Students write a pre- and post-test essay to determine if their writing skills have improved to the extent that they may move into a higher level of English in the fall semester. About 40% of the students have moved up one or more levels in the fall. Of the students who place into Eng 097 and Eng 098, 41% and 60% respectively, eventually register for college-level English 111. The program helps these students acquire the writing and study skills necessary to be successful so that they can reach college level and move on to earning their associate degrees. Our statistics show that once these “former developmental” students get to English 111, they are just as likely to earn a C or better as students initially placed in English 111.

Several STARS students have been invited into the international honor society, Phi Theta Kappa, by earning a 3.75 grade point average, have been honored at our campus-wide annual awards ceremony and seventeen have graduated and/or transferred to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. Several of our STARS students are campus leaders.

Initiated by a committee of dedicated people, this endeavor should ultimately include a commitment from faculty, administration, registrar, admissions, and financial aid. Collaboration both on and off campus is critical. Recruiting is done through our service area high schools and agencies, as well as through our placement testing coordinator. Creation of a series of small successes increases student confidence and motivation to continue on their chosen paths.

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## Camp “Of Course You Can”

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### **Tomball College and Cy-Fair College (TX)**

JADI JOHNSON

Like most community colleges, Tomball College was concerned about low success and retention rates for certain populations. To begin to address these concerns, Tomball identified students to target both from proactive and reactive perspectives.

#### **Proactive**

- GED
- Returning to school after extended layoff
- Needing two or more developmental courses

#### **Reactive**

- Probation students
- Suspension students

Although referred to as “students in transition,” these students were in a high risk category with regard to completing the semester.

Alexander Astin identified three common traits among successful college students: intellectual challenges, participation opportunities, and proper amount of support. Tomball College developed a program for the targeted population of students incorporating these elements of success.

In 1997, Camp “Of Course You Can” was launched. Meeting Monday through Friday, 9 A.M. to noon the week before classes start (this is in-service week for Tomball College), allows for reaching more students, as faculty and staff are available to lead sessions. Sessions are designed to build skills necessary for college success; naming them creatively sparks interest. Topics may include:

- Too Much Month at the End of the Money (finances)
- Dear John (writing tips)
- See Spot Run, Part XIII (reading tips)
- The Instructor Said What? (note-taking hints)
- Wall Street in Tomball (money management)
- A++ (test taking hints)
- P.A.I.N.T. Your Way to Success (general success tips)
- Hearing Aids (listening skills)
- Bicycle Built for Two (team-building)
- To Infinity and Beyond (math hints)
- Don't Worry, E-Happy (email accounts)
- See No, Hear No, Touch No Homework (learning styles)
- Personality Plus (Myers-Briggs Test Inventory results/career exploration)

Tomball College created its own student manual from information and material collected over the years from a variety of sources. Astin's research focuses prominently on the proper amount of student support. The camp manual serves as a resource for students. Faculty, staff, and students who lead sessions freely offer their time and demonstrate their care.

Each camp begins with a "Been There Done That" session. These are simple testimonials from someone who faced similar challenges but overcame them and reached their goal. These stories make a huge impact on students. Former campers have been included in these testimonials. After success sessions, camp ends with a challenge for students. First, there is a treasure hunt that students need to complete. This familiarizes students with campus resources and eliminates another barrier to success. Other challenges focus on math, reading, or writing skills. Challenges are fun and students look forward to them. The involvement in the program by various college personnel, including Student Life Center staff, provides a strong connection between the target student population and the college, another factor promoting student success.

Participation opportunities at a strictly commuter school presented quite a challenge, yet research indicates students involved in college life beyond class are more successful. Thus the "payment options" for camp were developed. Students pay \$200 or commit 20 hours of service time at \$10/hour. Service hours options are leadership opportunities. Students host events with high school students on campus, including job fairs or college nights. One student interested in theatre ran a spotlight for a production. Another musically talented student played piano for receptions on campus. Another helped the outdoor learning professor plan and conduct trips for his classes. Both instructor and camper benefited from these service hours.

Success of community college students is difficult to measure. Graduation rates do not accurately reflect success. Since the targeted population was at-risk for finishing the semester, Tomball College decided to use completion of the semester following camp as the benchmark for success. Results have been extremely positive. Through 2001, 139 students completed the program and 21 did not due to a variety of academic, medical, and various family problems. All in all, there was an 85% to 95% successful retention rate for this cohort.

Grades don't tell the whole story, as many benefits of the camp cannot be measured. Students develop self-confidence and leadership skills, and learn teamwork and problem-solving skills. Tomball College feels the camp program benefits students both academically and personally. Feedback from campers verifies this conclusion.

Initial funding came from the Carl Perkins Grant and current funding from the college. Manuals cost about \$15 each to produce, print, and bind. Brochures and posters cost about \$200; postage is \$50; and shirts are \$20 per camper/staff. Volunteer faculty and guests donate their time and talents to lead sessions. This is priceless.

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# The Learning Community: An Alternative Model for Assessment and Success

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## Central Arizona College (AZ)

SHAY CARDELL

MATTHEW CORNETT

MAREN WILSON

Located in rural southeast Arizona along the San Pedro River in Arizona's copper country, Central Arizona College, Aravaipa Campus, has instituted a Learning Community option for new students. Students who enter the Learning Community bypass traditional placement tests and enroll in a 13-credit course of study that meets in two 6.5-hour daily blocks.

Learning Community program components include alternative assessment strategies for gauging student progress and college readiness, coordinated partnerships between student services and instruction, team teaching, collaborative learning, and best-practice pedagogy for nontraditional students. Program disciplines include math, writing, archaeology, computer science, and success skills in a theme-based and team-taught curriculum.

Archaeology course objectives include understanding who we were, who we are, and who we can become. Other objectives focus on employing current archaeological methodologies and appreciating the importance of culture and cultural diversity. English objectives embrace developing clear and effective self-expression and enhancing critical and creative thinking skills through literary analysis and research data evaluation. Math objectives emphasize experiencing math as a meaningful form of communication, using multiple approaches and math as a laboratory discipline to solve problems, and analyzing systems behavior using mathematical models. Computer science objectives stress becoming empowered and confident members of the virtual community by learning how to research, retrieve, create, analyze, and store computer-derived data. An additional objective is learning to use the most commonly employed software applications and hardware components. Study skills objectives include developing critical reading and thinking skills, discovering one's most effective learning style, and becoming responsible for planning and implementing one's own personal and collaborative learning.

The curriculum incorporates math, composition, and computer skills embedded in hands-on archaeological activities. In one exercise students use math to map and record data collected at an archaeological site and analyze changes over a period of time. Students then write and publish a critical analysis of their fieldwork in a local newspaper.

Students participate in planning classroom activities and projects that include problem-based learning, service learning, field trips, presentations, library and

Internet research, simulations, and real life applications of skills. College orientation, career exploration, advisement and registration occur in the classroom. College professors from other disciplines introduce their subjects by presenting classroom activities.

Program directors evaluate program effectiveness and student results through institutional research resources and independent feedback. Students are tracked for program persistence and completion as well as program impact compared to a sample group who did not receive the Learning Community services. Instructors revise and enhance curricula and instructional methodologies based on annual summative evaluations, daily feedback derived from students, and institutional sources.

With demographics of 56% Hispanic, 44% Anglo-American, 70% female and 30% male students, the second-semester persistence rate for Learning Community students has been 88%, compared to 69% for the college as a whole.

The Aravaipa Learning Community was developed in recognition of the need to create alternative forms of instruction and assessment methodologies for students characterized as first-generation, displaced workers, or those lacking experience in the traditional classroom. Assessment results show improvement in student persistence and completion, academic progress, collaborative group skills, success in subsequent classes, critical thinking and participation.

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# Images of a Model Workforce Development Center

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## Clark College (WA)

BECKY MERRITT

MAXINE MITCHELL

The Workforce Development Center was created in 2002 to meet the needs of a growing population of people laid off in Clark County and returning to school. This new center provides training, job and career information, and eligibility for program funding in one convenient location.

The center is organized with the following programs and services: Southwest Washington Displaced Homemakers Center, Worker Retraining, WorkFirst programs such as WorkFirst Work Study and WorkFirst Financial Aid, Career Center, WorkSource (Washington State's one-stop effort), Employment Services, Cooperative Education, Internships, and Service Learning.

The focus of the center is the student. Working in partnership with business, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations, it serves students and employers efficiently, without duplication of services. Employment specialists help students develop resumes, practice interviewing skills and brainstorm techniques for the job search. The specialists also strategize with local employers to meet recruitment needs.

Many Workforce Development Centers combine employment services and career services. However, few also combine the eligibility-based programs that many students take advantage of. There are five major areas in the Workforce Development Center:

### Displaced Homemaker Program

- Clark College collaborates with YWCA of Clark County to serve women in life transitions through education, job search, counseling and support services. Classes are held each quarter.

### Worker Retraining

- The Worker Retraining Program helps unemployed workers re-enter the workforce. The program provides funding to community and technical colleges for retraining programs, as well as tuition funding for eligible students.

### WorkFirst

- WorkFirst is Washington State's welfare reform program that helps people in low-income families find jobs and become self-sufficient. Programs include the WorkFirst Work Study, where jobs are available on campus for students on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Financial aid is available to any low-income employed parent to pay for tuition.

### Career Center

- Provides students with up-to-date career information to make informed decisions related to education and career choices.
- Provides a multi-media “library” of career information.
- Provides several computerized career guidance systems.

### Employment Services

- Offers full-service job placement, and utilizes an online database system, allowing applicants to search and apply for jobs.
- Sponsors monthly Employer Guest Speaker Series and annual community Career & Job Information Fair.
- Coordinates the Cooperative Education Work Experience (internship) and Service Learning programs.

The Center hosts a variety of employers for on-campus recruiting throughout the year, such as for the Walt Disney World College Internship Program. Walt Disney World has stated that Clark College is one of its favorite and most successful regional recruiting sites.

The impact of the center has been immediate and dramatic. Within a matter of weeks of implementation, the number of people frequenting the area doubled. Students can research careers as well as look for work. Special populations (Displaced Homemakers and WorkFirst participants) can receive services, apply for funding, and explore careers in one convenient area.

The Workforce Development Center continues to meet its objectives. By working closely with all areas of student development, students find success in accessing services, enrolling in classes, and finding employment.

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# Opportunity Knocks: The Financial Aid Appeals Retention Model

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## Holyoke Community College (MA)

GAIL A. INDYK

The Financial Aid Appeals Retention Model is a supportive program and a comprehensive process leading to improved student success. As many as 800 students in one semester were required by federal financial aid guidelines to file an unsatisfactory academic progress appeal and were in danger of losing their financial aid. The Financial Aid Appeals Committee worked to transform the academic progress appeal process into an effective retention tool that requires students to take advantage of support services at the college.

Students are required to appeal due to repeated withdrawals, poor grades, grades of incomplete, or too many credits attempted. While reviewing the financial aid appeals, the committee found that many of these appeals could have been avoided had appropriate interventions been made. With student success as the goal, the committee concluded that students needed to be more conscious of the academic advising, learning services, and counseling support available at the college.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Improve student retention
- Introduce students to counseling and support programs within the Student Development Division
- Provide structure to the financial aid appeals process and reduce the number of repeat appeals
- Emphasize tracking, enforcement of conditions, and feedback from the referrals

The Financial Aid Appeals Committee is organized under the Student Development Division and administered through the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Senior Staff Assistant heads the committee and four teams conduct appeal reviews. The staffing is a collaboration of Financial Aid, Counseling Services, and other Student Development professionals.

On receiving the notice of unsatisfactory academic progress, the student is encouraged to meet with a member of the committee to prepare his/her appeal response. If the student has attempted at least 36 semester hours, he/she must meet with their advisor or a college counselor to develop a plan to complete graduation requirements. The plan asks for special recommendations and requires an advisor or a counselor signature plus a student signature of agreement. This plan must be attached to the appeal when the committee team meets to do a review that examines:

- What problems caused the student to make unsatisfactory academic progress?
- Were the special conditions followed on a previous appeal?
- Is there a practical semester-by-semester plan to complete the degree?

As part of the review, the appeal is approved or denied. If approved, the response from the committee includes special conditions and a detailed referral for the student to follow. The referral may be to a particular counselor, advisor, or staff member for an intervention such as: personal counseling and problem solving, development of a study plan, career counseling, accessing services, petitioning for grade changes, and scheduling or course changes.

In the most recent research, students involved in this process showed academic progress and an improved completion rate. The college-wide completion rate for all students in fall 2001 was 74%; in comparison the financial aid appellants achieved a completion rate of 67%, a remarkable rate considering their high-risk academic status.

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# Revising Enrollment Services: The Learning College Approach

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## Madison Area Technical College (WI)

DEBRA A. DERR

We all have read, researched, and even experienced the re-engineering of our college's enrollment services areas. So what makes this re-engineering project different? Simply, utilizing the seven principles of the Learning College as the core for discussion, planning, implementation and assessment of the re-engineering. The Madison Area Technical College (MATC) Enrollment Services project took to heart the Learning College principles and applied them to what, in most instances, would be considered "service areas."

Madison Area Technical College is one of 12 community and technical colleges recognized by the League for Innovation as a Learning College in 1999. The student services area at MATC took a hard look at how it was organized and asked whether or not the current organizational structure supported the learner through application of Learning College principles. The reality was, there were a number of changes needed to position student services to begin a journey of continuous improvement. The journey began with the development of a new mission for student services, including a new focus on student development and success.

During the *re-organization* phase, eleven separate units, administered independently of one another and lacking consistent communication among themselves, were brought together into three centers: the Enrollment Center; the Educational, Career Planning Center, and the Student Life and Development Center. The Enrollment Center encompassed Admissions, Assessment, Financial Aid, Prospective Student Relations, Registration, Records and Veterans Educational Services. The new Enrollment Center has a focus on collaboration and communication to include extensive cross training of staff.

The *re-engineering* phase included extensive examination of the roles and responsibilities of staff. In collaboration with the local union and the human resources office, a new position, Enrollment Facilitator, was created. These front-line facilitators serve as customer-friendly ambassadors of the Enrollment Center and the college. Staffing focused on the needs of the customer allowing for the availability of services to be driven by learner needs, especially during high-demand times. Cross training of staff provides flexibility for facilitators to move between functional areas.

The physical space was addressed through the *remodeling phase*. For the Enrollment Center to function as a cohesive unit and incorporate the new re-engineered service strategies, the seven areas of the Enrollment Center needed to be brought together into a single presence for students rather than the numerous single-service counters. The priorities included a highly visible and accessible reception area, cost efficiencies

in the sharing of equipment, and the relocation of the “Welcome Center” to the main entrance of the campus.

Finally, through ongoing efforts to determine student satisfaction, the *refinement phase* began (and continues). Students and staff were surveyed to determine the effectiveness of the changes made in alignment with Learning College principles. The data is used to continuously improve service delivery and has led to a new “Students First” initiative. The work of the Enrollment Center will now move beyond Enrollment Services to provide a model of continuous improvement for the College.

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# Collaborative Intervention Teams Program

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## Middlesex Community College (MA)

LYNN GREGORY  
MARTHA PIRONE

The Collaborative Intervention Teams Program is a partnership between the Student Development, Academic Resources and Academic Affairs divisions at Middlesex Community College that was designed to improve student retention and performance in developmental classes. The goals of the collaborative intervention teams are to:

- Develop proactive, aggressive outreach to engage students with staff and services as early as possible.
- Improve the course completion rate in developmental and other key courses.
- Increase collaboration between faculty and student development staff.

In the mid-1990s, data collected by the Institutional Research Division showed that the attrition rate for students in developmental courses was much higher than for students in standard college-level courses. Students who were enrolled in one or more developmental courses were not completing these courses (defined as receiving a passing grade) at the same rate as students who were enrolled in non-developmental courses. In addition, faculty who teach these classes were reporting that students appeared to have a disproportionate amount of personal needs in relation to the general college population and required additional support that they, as faculty, were unable to provide.

A collaborative intervention team usually consists of two or three individuals: (1) a faculty member, (2) a student development staff member, (for example, a counselor, learning disabilities specialist, health services counselor, etc.) and, as needed, (3) an academic tutor. These team members work together with students from one identified class section.

The specific interventions used by each team vary greatly, depending on the approach each team wishes to use and the background of the team members. In general, interventions will include, but are not limited to, several of the following activities:

- Administration and interpretation of individual assessment tools such as study skills and learning style inventories or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.
- Presentation of study skills, time management or career development workshops.
- Individual assistance with assignments that students are completing in class.
- Promotion of and direct connection to campus resources such as the academic support labs, counseling services, and disability support services.
- Phone calls, letters or individual meetings to promote a student's early awareness of his or her academic standing in the class and advise appropriate corrective actions.

The actual amount of time that the student development staff members or academic tutors spend in their designated classes can vary from attendance in every class to attending a minimum of four classes each semester to carry out specific, planned interventions.

Both quantitative and qualitative assessment tools were used in order to assess the impact of the program on participating students and faculty. Quantitative data comparing collaborative team classes with matched, non-collaborative team classes looked promising in 1999 with students in collaborative classes showing a 9% greater retention rate for the following semester, and, for collaborative math classes, earning fewer failing grades and having a 5% greater course completion rate. A similar study done more recently could not duplicate these results. Small sample sizes and the impossibility of having perfectly matched control groups have made quantitative evaluations inconclusive at this time. The use of qualitative assessments in the form of student, faculty and staff questionnaires has consistently provided us with very positive feedback as to the impact the program is having on students. Students, faculty and staff have all commented on the benefits of the increased attention and assistance students receive.

One of the most positive outcomes of the Collaborative Intervention Teams Program is the connection made between staff and faculty. The support, learning, and camaraderie that develop among professional staff and faculty clearly benefit these participants and ultimately benefit their students as well. Testimonies to this are the total number of team members and the longevity of their participation. Since the pilot program in 1999, a total of forty-two different individual student development staff, faculty and academic tutors have participated in the program. Thirteen faculty and staff have participated in the program for three or more semesters.

The program's flexibility makes it one that could be easily adapted to meet the particular needs of an institution. Limiting factors would be the number and availability of student development and academic support staff and the number of faculty who would be willing to take part in the program. As designed, the program does not require additional funding so monetary considerations are not an issue. Of utmost importance in forming teams is to pay careful attention to the "chemistry" of the team when matching faculty with student development and academic support staff. This chemistry plays a large part in contributing to the comfort and success of the team.

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# **Hands-On Technology: Creation and Use of a Mobile Mini Lab**

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**Midlands Technical College (SC)**

MICHAEL C. KELLY

The Mobile Mini Lab is composed of 18 laptop computers that are used to provide technology-based guidance services to participants in the Educational Talent Search (ETS) program at Midlands Technical College (MTC). The lab, split into three groups of six units each, is taken to 13 targeted middle and high schools throughout central South Carolina on a weekly basis. Utilizing wireless Internet access, a private website for participants, web-based email accounts and custom-designed assessments, the Mobile Mini Lab fulfills its mission: strengthening and sustaining interest in higher education and careers with technology.

In 2001, Educational Talent Search determined that more intensive efforts were needed to develop technology skills among the program's 1,000 participants, most of whom are low income, potential first-generation college students. Results of a survey indicated that 88% of the students in the program did not use computers outside of school. For those students who did use a computer outside of school, 83% reported that their only access was at an after-school job. Furthermore, more than twice as many students used a home computer only to produce homework than to use the Internet for a school-based research project.

The need for students to explore academic resources online, to learn how to use Internet browsers and email, to simply use computers on a more frequent basis, and to explore their postsecondary education and career options was fully evident.

Many issues related to daily use of the laptops, website, email and Internet access are now handled directly by ETS staff. The advisors are responsible for conceptualizing and planning custom lessons, developing assessments, and coordinating with the program's two Web Development Co-op Students to transform these activities into online content.

To get technology and support in place, the ETS Project Director requested assistance from other units at MTC. Micro System Services provided consultation on purchasing hardware and negotiating Internet access at each target site; Technical Support & Operational Services assisted with establishing an Internet domain, creating user accounts and contracting with a third-party vendor for email; the Student Development Services Web Developer assisted in designing and launching the website; and the Multimedia Development unit produced a series of lessons and assessments for participants.

Although full utilization of the technology initiatives is only in its second year, these resources have considerably enhanced satisfaction with ETS among participants, parents and target site administrators, as evident in surveys conducted in May of

2003. For the first time ever, 100% of the guidance counselors at targeted schools responded “yes” when asked if ETS services complement the overall guidance program at their schools.

The benefit to students is equally clear. “I think ETS is very helpful because I have been learning how to access information about different colleges at home on my computer,” said one student. Another stated, “I really enjoy the ETS program because it helps me in a lot of ways. If I need to ask a question all I have to do is email them.” In the first year of website operation, 80% of respondents agreed that the use of laptop computers and Internet during ETS sessions helped them with their technology and/or academic skills.

Because ETS is federally funded, compliance with grant objectives is critical. In the 2002–2003 year the outcomes were impressive: 82% of students participated in a technology-based activity with ETS, beating the 75% rate set forth in the objectives. In fact, these students participated in a total of 1,971 technology-based lessons, or an average of 2.3 such sessions per participant.

Collaboration and planning with other college units and the targeted schools has been critical to our success. Equally important is the selection of durable hardware that can withstand the daily transportation, setup and usage that our units experience. In addition to daily use, the ETS-MTC Mobile Mini Lab components have been utilized for a wide variety of special weekend events, parent/guardian meetings, and a summer job-shadowing program. We are continuously planning new events and activities to expand usage of the Mobile Mini Lab and other technologies in order to strengthen our participants’ interest in higher education and professional careers.

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# Returning to Formal Education for Adults

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## SUNY, Columbia-Greene Community College (NY)

MARIA KOLODZIEJ  
JOSEPH WATSON

In following our mission statement and in developing outreach programs, the Admissions Office took an alternative approach in offering an orientation to college education that was geared for the adult learner. The Office of Admissions designed a workshop for adult learners who were seeking to pursue postsecondary education.

Our experience has shown that many adult learners are apprehensive about the necessary steps: the paper process, what to take, financing, questions about their abilities, balancing school, family and work. All these issues overwhelm their decisions. In fact, it can delay or detract their decision to return to college. Making a formal appointment to speak with counselors or to start the enrollment process may be difficult. In response to these concerns, we designed a series of workshops that were offered through our Office of Community Services. Information on the workshops was advertised in the college's Community Services Newsletter, which is distributed to all community residents in Columbia and Greene counties, the area that the college serves. The workshop is offered every fall and spring semester and is open to the public free of charge. Each workshop is optional and has a stand-alone content.

In planning these workshops, several objectives were defined: to provide adult learners with solid information on returning to college, help adult learners be successful in their stay in college, and help adult learners gain a sense of empowerment by making conscious decisions that would assist them in their pursuit of education.

Four workshops were designed that covered college structure, programs, degrees offered, application, financial aid processes and the transitional development to becoming an adult learner. The program had a humanistic touch: all sessions were optional and set up as seminars. The seminars provided dynamics that encouraged group interactions, the sharing of experiences, and a hands-on component session. The coordinator was in attendance at each program session thus becoming the contact source. A team of professional counselors, an assistant in admissions and current Columbia-Greene Community College adult students facilitated the seminars.

The format included four scheduled evening workshops that were held consecutively once a week for four weeks: College Structure, Financial Aid, College Survival and Placement Testing. An exit interview was scheduled at the end of the workshops with each individual to discuss outcomes.

Assessment of the program has three forms:

1. Evaluations: Participants are given a workshop evaluation to rate the effectiveness of each workshop. Past evaluations indicated over 90% found the workshop to be excellent and the information they received assisted them in making a decision to return to education.
2. Increased Enrollment: The workshop enrollment increased at each session. We found that the majority of participants who completed the first workshop signed up for the following three. The first workshop became a feeder into the other three. Participants left the workshop feeling empowered. One participant commented “I am so glad I attended, I know I can do this now.”
3. Follow-up Contacts: The program coordinator contacts each participant as a follow-up to assist him or her in their decision process. We found that 75% actually enrolled in a class or began the application process either at our institution or another institution.

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 North Dakota        Wyoming

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**REGION 9**

Arizona                 Hawaii  
 California              Nevada

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Alaska                    Oregon  
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**REGION 12**

International

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# GATEWAY TO INNOVATIONS

for Student Development in Community Colleges

Summary Report of the Fifth Annual Conference of the  
National Council on Student Development

St. Louis, Missouri  
October 2003

Edited by  
**Dr. Charlene Dukes & Dr. Eleanor Brown**

**ACT**

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