How can we help more students succeed?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained to second year (all students)</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained to second year (Hispanic)</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained to second year (African American)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: IPEDS data
# Four-Year Graduation Rates for FTFT Students by fall of entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Students</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Students</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Athletes (receiving athletically-based aid)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: IPEDS data and OIRA report
## Six-year Graduation Rates for FTFT Students by fall of entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Students</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Students</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Athletes (receiving athletically–based aid)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: IPEDS data and OIRA report
# Students Dismissed at end of spring 2010 (n=243)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Students Dismissed</th>
<th>% of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic:</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic:</td>
<td>23.46%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6.17%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How our rates compare to those of our peer institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CCSU</th>
<th>Comparison Group Average*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four-year graduation rate</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2001 Cohort)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six-year graduation rate</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2001 Cohort)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight-year graduation rate</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2001 Cohort)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2010
Comparison Group

- Bridgewater State Univ.
- CUNY Brooklyn Coll.
- East Stroudsburg Univ.
- Montclair State Univ.
- SIU, Edwardsville
- Univ. of Central Missouri
- Univ. of Massachusetts, Dartmouth
- Univ. of Southern Maine
- Valdosta State Univ.
- William Paterson Univ.
Institutions with largest increases in six-year graduation rates (2003-08)

- Albany State Univ. 33% to 50%
- SUNY, New Paltz 54% to 71%
- SUNY, Cortland 50% to 63%
- Cal State, Long Beach 42% to 55%
- SUNY, Brockport 49% to 62%
- Univ. of Nebraska, Kearney 47% to 59%
- McNeese SU 26% to 37%
- UT, Pan American 26% to 35%
- Towson U 57% to 66%
- Univ. of Montevallo 42% to 52%
What they did to improve their rates
Focus on Likely Dropouts

- Identify students who need help (some institutions tried to identify characteristics that were possible predictors of non-completion)
Build up Advising Services

- Some institutions gave students a list of specific courses
- Find out from students what obstacles they face to graduation (e.g., too few sections of courses required for majors were creating choke points; adding more sections solved problem)
Involve Diverse Voices

- Involve colleagues throughout the campus in these discussions
Some institutions created new rules for scheduling courses to prevent overlaps and conflicts

T-shirts with anticipated graduation date for all incoming freshman at U MD, College Park

Make certain behaviors mandatory: attendance, mid-term grades, participation in study sessions, etc.

Redesign courses with high drop-failure-withdrawal rates

Institute programs to retrieve students who never graduated (e.g., Univ. of New Mexico; Graduate!CT)
Focusing on Graduation Rates is not Sufficient

Need to Establish Milestones, measurable intermediate outcomes, such as

- Return for subsequent term
- Complete needed remediation
- Begin college-level coursework in English and math
- Earn one year of college-level credits
- Complete general education coursework
- Complete a degree
Leading Indicators of Student Success

Tracking student attainment of Milestones requires a focus on Leading Indicators of Student Success

“Leading indicators statistically improve predicted probabilities of completion beyond student background characteristics.”

The Education Trust

Leading indicators are the key to maintaining “academic momentum.”
Using Milestones and Leading Indicators to Increase Success

1. Collect data on student progress along the milestones to degree completion
2. Note at what milestone points student progress is stalling
3. Analyze indicators to understand what successful patterns are not being followed, leaving students off track for a degree
4. Intervene through changes in policy or practice that address the problem and increase student success
5. Monitor the impact of these changes on milestones and indicators
Indicator: Course Participation

- Begin remediation in first semester
- Complete remediation in first year
- Complete college-level math/English within first two years
- Complete a college success course
Indicator: Course Performance

- High rate of course completion (80%)
- Limit withdrawals
- Complete 20-30 credits in first year
- Maintain adequate academic performance (GPA)
Indicator: Student Enrollment Patterns

Certain patterns lead to faster credit accumulation and provide momentum
- Earn summer credits
- Enroll full time
- Enroll continuously, without stop-outs
- On-time registration for courses
The Strategy for Improvement

- Identify variables that seemed to be early predictors of success or failure
- Change practices to affect those variables.
Case Study:
Georgia State University

19,000 undergrads, 1/3 minority, mostly African-American;

Identified potholes on pathway to bachelor’s degree:
- Low credit accumulation in first year
- High introductory course failure rates
- Drop off in retention during transition to majors

Developed and monitored department retention plans

Evaluated effectiveness of intervention strategies

Minority students now graduate at higher rates than peers; enrollment has grown more diverse
What we can do to improve our rates

- If we continue to do things as we always have, we will continue to get the results we do now.
- We have improved our retention and graduation rates, but our rates are objectively low and low in comparison to those of our peers.
- If we are serious about improving these rates, we need to change some of our policies and practices.
Plans for the A2S initiative in the coming year
Registering for a full credit load of relevant courses

Institute more intrusive advising for students to insure that they are

- selecting courses that move them toward graduation
- registering for a full credit load during preregistration
- making use of relevant support services (faculty office hours, Learning Center, Counseling Center, CACE, School Advising Center, ethnic centers, mentor, etc.),
- establishing feedback loops to mentors that alert advisors/mentors to timely course registration, registration changes, course drops, early warning system alerts, and course grades.
Registering for a full credit load of relevant courses

Insure that courses needed for academic progress are readily available by

- working with department chairs and Associate Deans to reduce course scheduling issues
- implementing Ad Astra Platinum and Banner feedback loops to insure that department chairs and Associate Deans receive detailed and timely feedback about course sections needed.
- Moving toward a schedule planning process informed by students’ academic needs and not by history and faculty preference and convenience.

Propose a policy to prevent first semester students from dropping a course without advisor approval.
Reduce # of students with D, F, or W in gateway or gen ed courses

Promote success in gen ed and gateway courses by
- making faculty and students more aware of the critical role of class attendance in academic success and encouraging faculty to take attendance in each class

  “Class attendance appears to be a better predictor of college grades than any known predictor of college grades—including SAT scores, HSGPA, studying skills and the amount of time spent studying. Indeed the relationship is so strong as to suggest that dramatic improvements in average grades (and failure rates) could be achieved by efforts to increase class attendance among college students”

  “Public universities, whose funding may be linked to graduation rates or time-to-completion statistics, are also likely to benefit from lower class failure rates—as will the taxpayers who fund such institutions.”
Reduce # of students with D, F, or W in gateway or gen ed courses

- encouraging faculty to provide students with early feedback on their academic performance
- expanding faculty use of the early warning system as a way to link students to needed support services
- putting early warning system data into Banner
- promoting faculty adoption of mid-term grades
Reduce # of students with D, F, or W in gateway or gen ed courses

- promoting adoption of limits on late withdrawals
- examining the possibility of assessing incoming students’ reading skills and offering structured supports for students with reading problems
- identifying gateway and gen ed courses with high rates of D, F, and W grades and supporting faculty redesign of those courses.
Reduce credits “spent” on remedial or developmental coursework

Decrease credits spent in pre-college level work by

- increasing the percentage of eligible students who participate in Bridges Institutes in Math and English
- increasing the efficacy of the Bridges Institute in English
- redesigning remedial courses to increase the number of students who complete them satisfactorily the first time, and implementing curricular revisions to restructure Math 101 (developmental math)

- Propose a policy to prevent students from dropping a required remedial course without instructor and advisor approval
What every faculty member can do

- Analyze aggregated data on rates of DFW in courses to identify choke points that may need some faculty attention.
- Commit to using the early warning system and provide prompt feedback especially to freshmen so those students can make use of campus support services.
- Consider that other CSU schools use mid-term grades (at least for freshmen) and that those help insure that struggling students are targeted for assistance.
- Take class attendance.
What we shouldn’t do

- Don’t lower standards
- Don’t excuse low graduation rates for some groups
According to the Education Trust, the “core difference” between institutions that increased student success and those that didn’t is that the former “are driven by what students need, not solely by employee preferences.”
Special thanks to Dr. Nancy Hoffman for her invaluable assistance in compiling data and for her thoughtful contributions to this presentation.
References

- Theokas, Christina and Ellyn Artis, “Access to Success: The Critical Role of Indicators,” Leading Indicators Webinar (December 2010), The Education Trust (www.edtrust.org)