

**Faculty and Student
Engagement at Durham
Technical Community College**

*Achieving the Dream Strategy
Institute*

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Durham Technical Community College

Who We Are

- Durham Technical Community College is one of the 58 North Carolina Community Colleges.
- We serve Durham and Orange Counties, which encompass Durham, the Research Triangle Park, Chapel Hill, and universities including Duke, NC Central University, and UNC at Chapel Hill.
- Durham Tech employs 139 full time faculty and 119 full time staff.
- The college serves approximately 5,500 curriculum students and 8,400 continuing education students each semester.

Institutional Context

- Round One Achieving the Dream Institution (2004—2009)
- Reaffirmation of Accreditation by Commission on Colleges of SACS (June, 2007)
 - Quality Enhancement Plan focused on Communication skill
- System-wide conversion to Datatel (2007)
- Opened new Student Services Center (2006)
- Opening Orange County branch campus (2008)
- “Breaking Through” Leadership College (2006-2009)

Our Achieving the Dream efforts

Focus on First Year Experience

- **Orientation:** A pre-enrollment session for new students to the college focused on making a successful transition into college life.
- **Early Alert:** A system for identifying and providing support to students who demonstrate signs of academic or personal difficulty.
- **Advising:** Transforming the current culture of advising as course approval into a system of support and engagement of students.
- **Academic Skills Course:** Providing a specific orientation course for students during the first semester of enrollment.

Faculty (and staff) Engagement

- Kick-off event in Fall, 2004
 - All faculty and staff invited to participate
 - Keynote address by David Dodson of MDC
 - Small group conversations focused on things we can do to engage students more effectively
 - Small group report-out over lunch

Faculty Engagement (continued)

- Cross-functional Team structure to implement all aspects of the initiative
 - Over 60 different faculty and staff members have been assigned to at least one team
 - Representation from all college divisions, departments and units

Student Engagement

- Food for Thought
 - Annual event organized by the Student Senate at nearby public housing project
 - Brings sense of community to residents and connects them with the college
 - Includes other local agencies and organizations

Student Engagement (continued)

- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
- Faces of the Future survey
- Survey of Non-Returning Students
 - Annual telephone survey of students in the Achieving the Dream cohort who do not re-enroll in Spring semester

What we learned from non-Returning Students

- Students are generally satisfied with their academic experience
- Students recognize the relationship between “engagement” and success
- Unsuccessful students are not aware of the challenges of college (time and money)
- Unsuccessful students are less likely to be “connected” to the college

Some Other Initiatives

- Change marketing tools to encourage career development instead of coming to “take a course.”.
- Develop textbook support options for low income students.
- Provide free city bus transportation to all eligible students.
- Focus the mentoring programs on more at-risk students.
- Develop an online orientation alternative.

Contact Information

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