Promising Practices
2011 Leader Colleges

Released: September 2011
Overview

- Every Achieving the Dream Institution develops and implements research-based practices and policies based on an analysis of its institutional strengths, problem areas, and achievement gaps.
- The colleges are committed to assessing the effectiveness of their practices and policies, institutionalizing approaches that prove successful, and sharing their findings widely.
Overview

- This deck is a working document, providing an overview of some promising practices and policies for improving student outcomes as reported by the 2011 Leader Colleges.

- The practices and policies range from college readiness programs, mandatory new student orientation, student success courses, developmental course redesign, curriculum redesign, to cooperative learning, learning communities, and intensive and individualized advising.
Please Keep in Mind…

- These promising practices are implemented as part of Achieving the Dream’s larger Student-Centered Model of Institutional Improvement.

- These institutions have committed to Achieving the Dream’s Four Principles of Institutional Improvement and Five-Step Process for Increasing student Success, and are creating a culture of evidence in which data and inquiry drive broad-based institutional efforts to improve student outcomes.

- Attempts to replicate any promising practice described in this deck should be done in the context of Achieving the Dream’s integrated institutional improvement framework.

Success is what counts.
Use of Evidence to Improve Programs and Services

The college establishes processes for using data about student progression and outcomes to identify achievement gaps among student groups, formulates strategies for addressing the gaps identified and improving student success overall, and evaluates the effectiveness of those strategies.

Success is what counts.
Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services

- **Brazosport College**, Lake Jackson, TX
  Data Collection and Writing Center Implementation
  Coach: George Baker
  Data Coach: Ted Wright

- **Tacoma Community College**, Tacoma, WA
  Improved Research Functions
  Coach: Bernadine Fong
  Data Coach: Bill Piland

- **Yakima Valley Community College**, Yakima, WA
  Increased Institutional Research Capacity
  Coach: Frank Renz
  Data Coach: Mark Figueora
After reviewing success rates in developmental English courses, responses from the Community College Student Survey of Engagement (CCSSE), results from a recent faculty survey on current writing practices and noting an increase in writing tutoring sessions, Brazosport College created a drop-in writing center. First, the college completed a review of best practice research, interviewed other Achieving the Dream institutions, conducted a faculty survey, and invited a presentation from a local writing center director and state representative for the Southwest Writing Center Association. Thus far, the results are promising and indicate an increased use of writing services.
Tacoma Community College: Improved Research Functions

At the beginning of their Achieving the Dream participation, Tacoma Community College found that faculty needed more access to information, so they began providing additional data support. The college allocated resources to hire additional research personnel and implemented an institutional research request tracking system. Finally, the college secured a more sophisticated set of data analysis tools. Between 2008 and 2010, stakeholders increased their ratings of the institutional research department on all measures, including usefulness, clarity, and helpfulness.
Before participating in Achieving the Dream, Yakima Valley Community College had no centralized research function capable of gathering, analyzing, and reporting out on student success data. To address this need, YVCC created the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and appointed a director, charged with organizing a data team. A Research Analyst was hired to oversee strategy research. Over four years of Achieving the Dream participation, OIE staff have developed data storage and research protocols, created numerous reports for frequently requested information, assisted with grant evaluation plans, contributed to accreditation efforts, and supported a variety of student success efforts by providing timely, accurate data.
For questions or comments, contact:

Lauren Lewis
Assistant Director of Communications
Achieving the Dream
240-450-0075 x 317
llewis@AchievingtheDream.org