

An Exploration of Academic and Student Services Milestones on the Path to Community College Completion

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Introduction

National and state agendas are focused on a completion agenda.

California community colleges are situated to fill this gap.

- Enroll 2.9 million students annually
- Awards certificates and degrees
- Functions as a pathway to transfer

Current research focuses on **milestones** or **momentum** points along the pathway to degree/certificate completion or transfer.

Introduction

Examining milestones can (Offenstein & Shulock, 2010):

- Deepen the understanding of the barriers to completion
- Help identify specific interventions for improvement
- Colleges and the system office can dig deeper into the data to better understand policies and practices that may improve student success

The Student Success Taskforce for California Community Colleges also includes potential milestones:

- Provide students the opportunity to consider attending full time
- Require students to begin addressing basic skills deficiencies in their first year
- Require students to declare a program of study early in their academic careers

Purpose of Study

Explore academic and student services milestones to better understand how students at a large, suburban, community college are progressing towards completion (as defined by degree/certificate completion or transfer).

Analysis of milestone completion as intermediate outcomes.

Findings can inform academic and student services policies and practices to increase student progression from entry to completion by identifying specific interventions for improvement.

Existing Research

Students who follow these patterns are more likely to complete:

- complete college-level math and English within 2 years of enrollment
- complete 20 units in the first year of enrollment
- take summer courses
- complete at least 80% of the courses in which they enroll
- register for courses on time
- attend full time

Students who registered on time for more than 80% of their courses had a completion rate of 39%.

Students who completed a success course had a completion rate of 35%.
(Moore, Shulock & Offenstein, 2009)

Milestones

Milestones are the steps students achieve on their way to degree/certificate completion or transfer.

Academic Milestones

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Enrolled in college level math or English course | Registered for classes on time | Enrolled in a success course, cohort program | Enrolled full-time | Earned 20+ units in the first year | Enrolled in summer courses |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|

Student Services Milestones

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Attended Orientation | Took placement exams in first year | Enrolled in courses equivalent to placements | Developed education plan with a counselor | Declared a program of study | Attended tutoring or skills workshop |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|

Outcome Measures

Targets students achieve on their way to completion that increase the likelihood they will attain their educational goal.

Outcome Measures

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Quarter-to-quarter retention | Year-to-year retention | Continuous enrollment | Completed general education curriculum | Completed a program of study | Earned a degree or transferred |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|

Research Questions

1. What percentage of our degree/certificate and transfer students successfully meets the academic and student services milestones?
2. Do differences exist in the percentage of students who successfully meet the milestones based upon their ethnicity and gender?
3. Of the students who successfully meet the milestones, what percentage meets the outcome measures?
4. Do differences exist in the percentage of students who successfully meet the outcome measures based upon their ethnicity and gender?
5. Do different milestones have a disparate impact on the outcome measures for student success?

Methods

Cohort of first time students with 6+ units in first year

Excludes concurrent enrollment students

Excludes one course takers

Cohort tracked for 5 years

Disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, and zip code (proxy for income)

Preliminary Results

Registering for Classes on Time

In fall 2010 at De Anza:

- 2% of students at De Anza registered up to two weeks after the quarter started
- A larger proportion of Black, Latino and White students registered late than the proportion that registered on time.

Enrollment in a Cohort Program

In 2010-11 at De Anza:

- About 10% of students at De Anza were enrolled in a learning community.
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Next Steps

- Identify the percentage of the cohort that has met the milestones
 - Identify the percentage of the cohort that has not met the milestones
 - Identify which milestones lead to the highest completion rates
 - Identify differences in milestone completion by ethnicity, gender and socio economic status
 - Share the results widely with the campus community
 - Determine other areas needed for further research
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References

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