STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PERSISTENCE: LEADERSHIP AND THE COMPLETION AGENDA

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Wayne County Community College District
WCCCD At A Glance

- Serving 500 square mile region serving 32 communities in Wayne County, Michigan
- Enrolling more than 70,000 students, credit and non-credit each year
- Cultural diverse student body representing more than 60 countries
- Offering more than 100 certificate and degree programs
Focus Areas

• How to share evidence to support decisions to improve student persistence?
• How to sustain committed leadership at a Multi-Campus district to promote student success, persistence, and completion?
• How to enhance broad engagement across the institution?
• How to align systemic improvement with student services and curriculum?
Persistence and Completion Agenda

- **Students will have an education plan of work developed with an academic advisor**
- **Students will make use of academic support services**
- **Student engagement in campus life will increase**
- **Students will more likely attain their educational and career objectives**
- **Students will more likely persist and complete programs of study**
The overall goal of the Completion 2020 Agenda is to increase the number and percentage of students earning college credentials by redesigning WCCCD’s student flow model; that is strengthening college services at each stage from entry to exit by focusing on college readiness processes in cooperation with community partners.
Persistence and Completion

Key Components

• Re-assignment of senior-level district staff to the campuses
• Re-alignment of campus student services
• Intense orientation and customer focused training for staff and faculty
• Modification of physical resources at campuses to support a student-focused program-oriented advisement center
Persistence and Completion
Key Components (continued)

- Engagement of discipline-specific faculty in the advisement process
- Assessment of student outcomes required for strengthening and enhancement of processes and services
Focus Concerns for Leadership!

- Commitment of Senior Leadership
- Closing the Achievement Gap
- Embracing Student Success as a Top Priority
- Integrating AtD principles in institutional planning and budgeting
Broad Engagement

• Involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders in decision-making
• Professional Development for Faculty and Staff
• Engaging all Faculty and Mid-Level Managers in ownership of Student Success
• Regular And Ongoing Interaction with Community Stakeholders
Data-Driven Decision Making

- Use of disaggregated longitudinal data to inform institutional decision-making.
- Identify achievement gaps to streamline intervention impact.
- Conduct survey research data to evaluate overall satisfaction and intervention quality.
- Share data, reports, and information through administrative cabinet, taskforces, and council meetings.
Contributing to a Multi-Year National Initiative to Increase Student Success

Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) has the distinction of being selected as one of less than 90 community colleges to participate in the national Achieving the Dream (AtD) initiative, and is one of six community colleges brought into the partnership in Michigan in 2007-2008.

The Achieving the Dream initiative was created by a number of national partners to increase the number of community college students who succeed by completing developmental education and college-level courses with a “C” or better, return to college from semester to semester, and complete certificate and degree programs. The national partners include the Lumina Foundation for Education, the American Association of Community Colleges, the Kellogg Foundation and the Kresge Foundation. The WCCCD AtD initiative is funded by a five-year grant from the Kresge Foundation.

WCCCD completed the planning year for AtD participation in 2007-2008. A four-year implementation period began in fall 2008, and will conclude at the end of the 2011-2012. WCCCD identified four priority interventions based on research on student achievement patterns, these are:

- **Student Advising**: increase student involvement in student orientation, testing, advising, and course placement.
- **Developmental Education**: increase student achievement in developmental education courses, beginning with English departmental education courses, and in the transition from Developmental Education and college-level courses.
- **Student Retention**: increase the percentage and number of students who persist from fall to fall semesters, and who complete certificate and degree programs.
- **Institutional Effectiveness and Research Capacity**: increase the institutional research capacity of the Institutional Effectiveness function with a focus on collecting and using student learning outcomes data.
Achieving the Dream Initiative: Key Interventions

As part of the Achieving the Dream Initiative that began in 2007, WCCCD identified key interventions that were evaluated annually for overall impact and scalability.

- Learning Communities
- Early Alert System
- Enhanced Student Services
  - Professional Development and training focused in student needs
  - Integration of intrusive advising model
  - Integration of technology use to promote student service efficiency.
Learning Communities

Students successfully completing Study Skills Workshop in their Learning Community Cohort Group

Dr. Ella J. Davis~ ATD Lead Faculty

Students who take learning community classes strengthen their process of learning across disciplines. Thus, the power of this method of learning is that it builds and nurtures critical thought that empowers students in all areas in their academic studies and lives.
Testimonials

“The linked courses were helpful and it assisted me with other courses. The Achieving the Dream experience is the most trouble-free and stress-free program. I will refer this program to my family and Friends.” Kyra Champion

“The program taught me study skills, discipline and how to progress at the college level. The wonderful staff and instructors made the program the best in the state of Michigan.” Tyrone Brown, Liberal Arts

“I love the Achieving the Dream program because there was always someone to go to if you needed help whether it involved school or not and the support staff, such as counseling were great.” Raja Badran, Child Development and Psychology Major.
Testimonials

“My name is Brenda Rucker and I am a second year AtD student. I asked Earlene Williams, my AtD advisor. To please place me back into the program after my first semester because I felt the program worked for me. The extra attention given to me by the patient, caring and professional instructors and the many AtD workshops were extremely helpful. I was so fortunate to find this program, as I am a late bloomer and came to WCCCD filled with enthusiasm, but not the confidence I needed to be successful. Thank you WCCCD and AtD for assisting me in achieving my dream”

“The English 119 course taught by Mr. Cooper was my best subject and all the anxiety I brought with me to the college soon faded because of the support and instructional staff.” Helen Green, Accounting Major
2008: Student Success Centers

- Proactive Student Services
  1.1 Streamlined Registration Process
  1.2 Online Student Services
  1.3 Financial Aid Process Transformation
  1.4 Academic Advising and Career Counseling Expansion
  1.5 Student Service Monitoring and Tracking

Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) announced services available for students through Webgate update! You can now access your personal account information 24 hours per day/7 days a week/365 days a year from anywhere! WCCCD’s latest Webgate update makes it possible for you to take control of your student information including: financial aid services, transcripts, student accounts, grades, admissions and registration information, the emergency alert system and more. You can also take advantage of the NEW Student Services/Financial Aid Self-Service Information Centers available on each campus open three days each week with both day and evening hours. A Customer Service Representative will staff the center and provide assistance in accessing your information through Webgate.
What Has Happened?

• Early Alert System Intervention Expansion
• Reallocation of human, technical, and fiscal resources to support student success interventions
• Alignment of AtD with ongoing student success activities in the District (Michigan Leader College)
• Resource support systems (Dream-Keepers)
• Student Retention Centers
Persistence and Completion Agenda Outcomes

- Increase in Term to Term persistence
- Increase the number of degree and certificate completers
- Increase early alert system and learning community capacity
- Continue Survey Research
  - Entering Student Experiences
  - Learning Community Experience and Satisfaction
  - Early Alert System Impact
  - New Graduate Exit Experiences
WCCCD ranked #7 among community colleges nationwide in awarding degrees and certificates to African American students.
In Spring 2011, WCCCD enrolled approximately 25,000 academic students with as much as 31% of students impacted by EAS.
“Thank you very much for your assistance, it meant the world to me how you took the time and just did your job effectively. You never know how that little thing can make the difference in someone’s life.

So many people pass the buck because of extra paperwork, but people like you who take the time and cheerfully service your clients shine God’s light in darkness of it all.

I am so excited to finally have this process in motion; I am better late than never and you haven’t heard the last. Thanks again.”

Ms. P. Taylor
Student Success Centers
Student Call Centers: All Hands on Deck!
Student Retention Center
WCCCD enhances its student success efforts by providing *Dreamkeepers*, a program of Scholarship of America and established by the Lumina foundation to help students overcome unforeseen challenges and financial emergencies and remain focused on their academic goals.

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**Dreamkeepers Funding Now Available**

Location: Via Online Application

Wayne County Community College District's Retention Center is happy to announce that the On-line Student Application for Dreamkeepers funding is now available to current WCCCD students. Dreamkeepers, a program of Scholarship America, which was established by Lumina Foundation for Education, helps students overcome unforeseen financial emergencies and remain focused on what matters most - their education. In order to be considered for the Dreamkeepers program, students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be a current WCCCD student
- Have a minimum GPA of 2.0 or have documentation showing you are earning at least a 'C' in all current classes.
- Have documentation demonstrating financial need.
- Be a first-time recipient of Dreamkeepers funds.

Please note that financial aid may be a factor in determining eligibility.

Eligible students are invited to visit the On-line Student Application website at [https://wcccd.dreamkeepers.org/](https://wcccd.dreamkeepers.org/)
Completion Agenda!
Discussion

Student Success

- Evidence-Based
- Committed Leadership
- Broad Engagement
- Institutional Improvement
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