

Peer Group Report

Large Community Colleges

Submitted to CB Staff February 6, 2008

Community colleges are unique educational institutions with varying differences between one another concerning mission, intent, philosophy, etc. These broad and diverse missions include programs that are targeted for freshman and sophomore level post-secondary students, but also encompass career/vocational courses, job training programs, developmental and continuing education and a variety of community and individual enrichment activities. The student population is equally diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, academic preparation and reasons for enrollment. Many students who choose to attend a community college are full-time employees who are middle aged and attend school on a limited part-time basis.

Large community colleges are comprehensive institutions for reasons stated above and serve enrollments ranging from 7,300 to 14,000 students. Often located in population service areas of 100,000 to 250,000 residents, these service areas are composed of counties with conservative tax bases struggling to support both community college needs while supporting local school districts. Enrollments are diverse with each college striving to serve the need of the surrounding population. Perkins IV and HB1 set forth requirements to serve area high schools within each service area. To meet this requirement large community college districts have expanded dual credit, Tech prep, and other technical programs to pipeline secondary students into higher education. Increasing participation in these programs includes offering higher education to more minority students closing the participation gap.

There are eight colleges comprising this group: Amarillo College, Amarillo, Texas; Blinn College, Brenham, Texas; Central Texas College, Killeen, Texas; Del Mar College, Corpus Christi, Texas; Laredo Community College, Laredo, Texas; South Plains College, Levelland, Texas; Texas Southmost College District, Brownsville, Texas; and Tyler Jr. College, Tyler, Texas

Selected Success Measures for Group Focus

During a joint session in November the large community colleges chose six measures to use as indicators of success. The six measures, listed below were chosen as the areas of emphasis for FY 2008.

#10: Graduation and Persistence: Percent of first time, full time, credential-seeking undergraduates.

The Large CC group has improved their graduation and persistence rates by an average of 8.6%.

#11: Graduation Rate: Three, four, and six year graduation rate.

	FY 2000			FY 2004			FY 2005			Point Change FY 2000 to FY 2005
	Entering Fall Cohort	Rate		Entering Fall Cohort	Rate		Entering Fall Cohort	Rate		
3-Year graduation rate (Total)	1997	1,116	12.4%	2001	1,466	13.2%	2002	1,232	12.6%	0.2
4-Year graduation rate (Total)	1996	1,648	19.2%	2000	1,935	20.3%	2001	2,428	21.8%	2.6
6-Year graduation rate (Total)	1994	2,173	29.2%	1998	2,939	34.2%	1999	3,615	38.8%	9.6

#12: Number of associate degrees, certificates by type, core completers and field of study completers by gender and ethnicity:

Large CC group increased the number of their awards in a 6 yr period by 35.3%. Associate Degrees rose by 42.5%, Cert 1 rose by 24.1% and Cert 2 rose by 8.0%.

#14: The percent of underprepared and prepared students who successfully complete a related college-level course within 3 years if they tested above the deviation or 4 years if they tested under deviation by subject areas.

Fall 2003 Cohort							
	Total	Credit by examination	Number attempting college level course	Percent attempting college level course	College level course completion (grade A, B, or C)	College level course completion (grade A, B, C) (percent of those attempting college level)	College level course completion (grade A, B, C) (percent of total)
Number of FTIC students	22,740						
Met state standards in all areas							
Math	11,467	1,121	3,464	30.2%	2,269	65.5%	19.8%
Reading	11,467	2,894	5,849	51.0%	4,324	73.9%	37.7%
Writing	11,467	2,452	4,878	42.5%	3,350	68.7%	29.2%
All students in developmental education							
Math	8,192	N/A	1,582	19.3%	1,050	66.4%	12.8%
Reading	5,183	N/A	1,887	36.4%	1,214	64.3%	23.4%
Writing	4,047	N/A	1,439	35.6%	918	63.8%	22.7%
Not met state standards: In all three areas							
Math	2,316	N/A	385	16.6%	255	66.2%	11.0%
Reading	2,316	N/A	610	26.3%	360	59.0%	15.5%
Writing	2,316	N/A	671	29.0%	397	59.2%	17.1%

#19: Graduates' status after graduation: Percent of graduates:

	FY 2004		FY 2005		Point Change FY 2004 to FY 2005
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
Percent of student either employed and/or enrolled in a Texas senior institution within one year of graduation					
Academic					
Employed Only	1,290	33.5%	1,269	34.5%	- 1.6%
Employed and Enrolled (in Senior Institutions)	1,525	39.6%	1,398	38.0%	- 8.3%
Enrolled Only (in Senior Institutions)	566	14.7%	515	14.0%	- 9.0%
Enrolled Only (in Community Colleges)	122	3.2%	141	3.8%	15.6%
Not Found	350	9.1%	359	9.8%	2.6%
Technical					
Employed Only	3,343	78.1%	3,485	81.9%	4.2%
Employed and Enrolled (in Senior Institutions)	247	5.8%	258	6.1%	4.5%
Enrolled Only (in Senior Institutions)	92	2.1%	57	1.3%	- 38.0%
Enrolled Only (in Community Colleges)	155	3.6%	160	3.8%	3.2%
Not Found	445	10.4%	294	6.9%	- 33.9%

#23: The percent of underprepared and prepared students who return the following fall.

The percent of underprepared and prepared students who return the following fall.	Total	Number returning (Fall 2005)	Percent returning (Fall 2005)
Number of FTIC students	22,740		
Met state standards in all areas	11,467	8,317	72.5%
Not met state standards:			
 In all three areas	2,316	1,195	51.6%

Best Practices

Texas Community Colleges incorporate many innovative ideas into student recruitment, persistence, and success. Among the Large Community College group these practices include the use of technology to reach outlying areas. Internet, interactive television, and recorded instruction courses are no longer experimental but have become mainstays of college course offerings. Our group makes use of dual credit instruction, offering college level instruction to high school students at no cost or a reduced rate which helps many financially strapped Texas families. The group's colleges offer instructional courses, and some complete degree programs, over the Internet allowing those who work full time one more option to improve their education. Large community colleges send representatives out in their communities and school districts to help students and parents understand what is needed and expected to enroll and succeed in college.

Our colleges reach out to students and families who never considered college an option. After recruiting students whose family has little or no prior college experience we interact closely. Large community colleges offer "intrusive" advising, staying involved with the student, monitoring the student's progress, keeping the student aware of what's expected. Some colleges in this group award degrees or certificates without students having to go through a degree application process and also track non-graduating transfers to four year institutions to remind them that they may earn a two-year degree by reverse transferring hours to the community college. Our group is active in securing grants from many sources which helps to fund faculty training, assess student learning outcomes, student success centers, and training in using new technology.

Texas Community Colleges continue to improve services, recruit more students, offer contemporary programs, contemporary training facilities, and increase the number of relevant degrees/certificates awarded despite ever tightening financial constraints. Use of technology, streamlining services, and alternative funding approaches keep local community colleges one of the best educational bargains in the State of Texas.