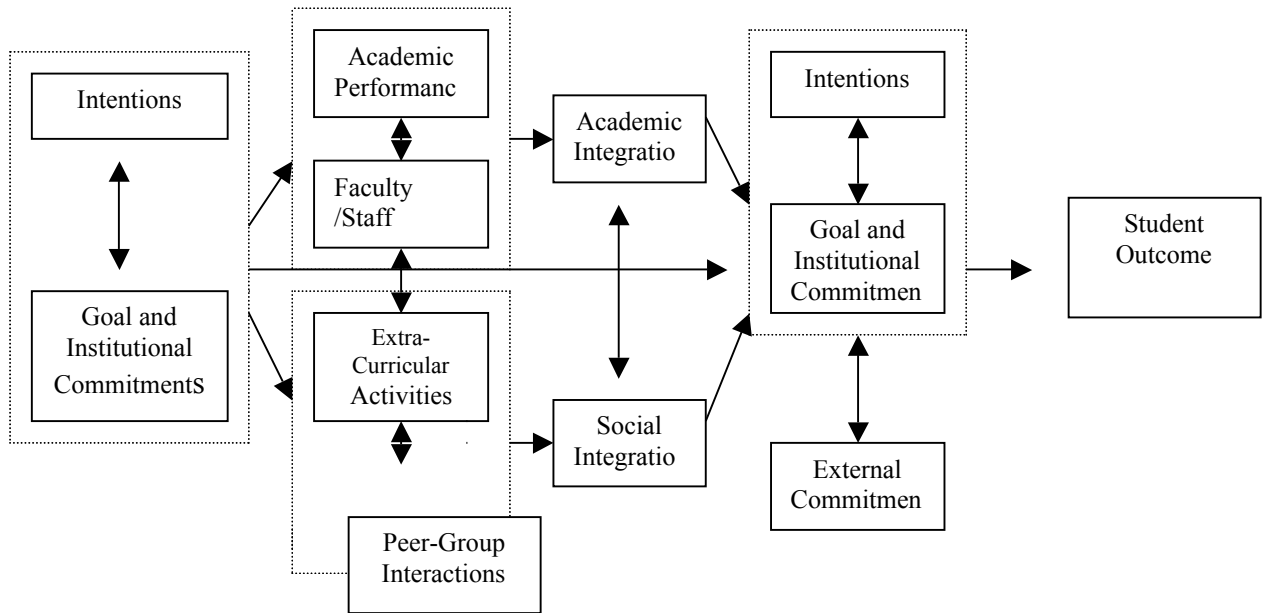


Community College of Philadelphia

Assumptions Related to Student Success
October 4, 2006 Data Team Meeting

The discussion at the October 4, 2006 Achieving the Dream Data Team meeting started with a review of the conceptual framework that has informed institutional research at CCP.



The following assumptions related to student success emerged from the discussion among team members.

- College practices and pedagogical methods can be influenced in directions that will lead to improved achievement by students.

- Student success hinges on the educational communities in the College; program; classroom level that integrate students into the intellectual and social life of the College.
- A measure of the effectiveness of courses, programs, and policies is the extent to which the courses, programs, and policies increase the level of student engagement.
- Given that most students spend a large percentage of their time at CCP in the classroom, academic engagement, in general, is more important to student success than social engagement.
- The CCP classroom serves as an intellectual and social meeting place where students can connect with faculty and other students. Students who make this connection will apply themselves to the learning process and be successful.
- The quality of student interactions with faculty, staff, and other students is more important to student engagement and success than the quantity of these interactions.
- A good fit between learning and teaching methods encourages student engagement and success.
- Enriched classroom experiences and learning environments that provide active learning opportunities will enhance student engagement and success.
- Linking theory and practice by connecting classroom concepts and discourse with student's prior knowledge and understanding of the world will encourage engagement and success.
- Student engagement and success in a course are related to faculty who are interested and enthusiastic about their course content and teaching at a community college.
- Student engagement and success in a course are related to faculty that students perceive are respectful of all students; provide clear course and student expectations; provide detailed syllabi; provide timely feedback; and apply consistent and fair grading practices.
- Students who are not appropriately challenged in the classroom will not be intellectually engaged.
- Gatekeeper courses that are taught by the best instructors in a department will promote greater student engagement and success both in the gatekeeper course and courses next in the sequence.

- Specification of competencies required to succeed in the next course in the sequence and alignment of competencies between prerequisite courses and courses next in the sequence are essential to student success.
- An academic standard applied systematically across all sections of a course is essential to student success.
- Faculty professional development that promotes a student centered culture will increase student engagement in courses. Information should include teaching modalities, best teaching practices, and faculty-to-faculty mentoring.
- Institutional practices related to course scheduling contribute to a student-centered learning experience and consequently impact student engagement and success. This includes practices that encourage sustained relationships between faculty members and students.
- Students who have clearly defined educational and career goals and an appropriate educational plan to achieve their goals are likely to be engaged and successful, and better able to overcome institutional and personal barriers that put them 'at risk'.
- Students with poorly defined educational and career goals who receive institutional support that increases their self awareness of career opportunities will be more engaged and successful than 'undecided' students who do not receive this support.
- Students who experience continuity in working with an advisor to develop an academic plan experience more successful outcomes than students who do not experience continuity in this relationship.
- Facilities that provide the opportunity for students to interact with other students outside of the classroom promote student engagement and success.
- Early intervention strategies for at-risk students have the potential to improve student engagement and success.
- Lack of parity in student outcomes is linked to the qualitative differences in learning opportunities and experiences provided to students, including differential interactions that occur in the class between student and instructor.

Based on the importance of the relationship between student engagement and student outcomes and the AtD objective to ensure parity in students outcomes, the Data Team suggested the College participate in The Community College Survey of Student Engagement in order to determine if there is a causal connection between parity in

student outcomes and qualitative differences in learning opportunities and experiences provided to students.

The Data Team also suggests that the College systematically gather educational and career goal information from students so it can be used to identify potentially at-risk students who might benefit from proactive interventions that are designed to provide direction.