



**Office of
Institutional
Research**

**Redefining Student Success
-Successful CCP ‘Drop-Outs’-**

Part C

IR Report # 180

August 2008

**Community
College
of Philadelphia**

Introduction

This report is the third in a series that features information about successful CCP ‘drop-outs’. Institutional Research Report # 178, titled *Redefining Student Success – Successful CCP Drop-Outs- Part A*, (available at http://www.ccp.edu/VPFIN-PL/ir/irrep_on.htm) drills into the core of CCP ‘drop-outs’ (former students). The information in the report supports the use of a broader perspective when assessing institutional effectiveness since many CCP ‘drop-outs’ have had successful academic experiences at the College.

Table 1 provides information concerning the size of this former student group. Included among the students who left CCP at the end of spring and fall 2006 semesters were 5,929 former students who did not earn a CCP degree and were academically successful¹ at the time they discontinued their enrollment at the College.

Table 1
Departing Student Success ²

	Departing Students	Graduated	Long-Term Success	Short-Term Success	Unsuccessful
Fall 2001	4782	6.3 %	35.5 %	19.3 %	38.9 %
Fall 2002	4773	4.8 %	30.9 %	21.0 %	43.3 %
Fall 2003	5021	5.0 %	32.2 %	19.6 %	43.3 %
Fall 2004	4973	5.3 %	31.5 %	18.6 %	44.7 %
Fall 2005	4326	6.1 %	37.0 %	17.3 %	39.6 %
Fall 2006	4179	6.0 %	34.7 %	17.8 %	41.6 %
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Spring 2002	6773	11.0 %	32.2 %	19.2 %	37.6 %
Spring 2003	7052	10.9 %	34.0 %	19.0 %	36.1 %
Spring 2004	7783	12.5 %	34.8 %	17.7 %	35.0 %
Spring 2005	7877	11.8 %	35.6 %	17.1 %	35.5 %
Spring 2006	6828	12.5 %	37.6 %	17.1 %	32.7 %

¹ Academic success is defined as having achieved a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher at departure from CCP.

² Success categories are defined as follows:

- Graduates are students who earned certificates or associates degrees at the College.
- Long term success is defined as departure with a GPA of 2.0 or greater and 12 or more cumulative credit hours earned.
- Short term success is defined as departure with a GPA of 2.0 or greater and 11 or fewer cumulative credit hours earned.
- The unsuccessful departure group includes all departing students not otherwise classified including students who never complete a college-level course.

Institutional Research Report # 179, titled *Redefining Student Success –Successful CCP Drop-Outs- Part B*, (available at http://www.ccp.edu/VPFIN-PL/ir/irrep_on.htm) drills down further to learn more about former students' reasons for enrolling at the College; their progress in achieving educational goals; and their satisfaction with the college experience. The information in the report is based on a survey of the 5,929 former CCP students who did not earn a CCP degree and were academically successful at the time they discontinued their enrollment at the College.

The information in IR Report # 179 demonstrates the College is effective in supporting the educational objectives of students, especially those with an interest in pursuing their higher educational aspirations. The report also provides information that can be used to inform institutional discussions about potential strategies that hold the promise for encouraging greater student persistence.

The present report continues down this path by focusing on two questions that were part of the former student survey, both related to reasons for the student's discontinued enrollment. These are: *Please explain why you discontinued your enrollment at the College* and *What could the College have done to encourage you to continue your education at CCP*.

Nearly 10% of the former CCP students who were included in the survey were unreachable due to incorrect mailing addresses. Seven percent (7%) of reachable former students completed usable questionnaires. Given the low response rate, respondents were compared to non-respondents to better understand the representativeness of the respondents and the consequent level of risk associated with using the survey responses to inform decisions. The following characteristics were compared across groups: race, gender, age, PELL eligibility, cumulative GPA, cumulative credits earned, ratio of credits earned to credits attempted, CCP program area, and enrollment in higher education subsequent to CCP. Since respondents and non-respondents differed in terms of only two of these characteristics, gender and age, it appears appropriate to use the student feedback gathered via this survey as a resource in making decisions. Specifically, the nature of the imbalance across groups is respondents were more likely to be female and slightly older than non-responding former students.

Goal Accomplishment

All of the former students described in this report earned a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 but they differ in terms of the length of time they were enrolled at the College. Short-term successful students (STS) earned fewer than 12 CCP college-level course credits prior to departure and long-term successful students (LTS) earned more than 11 college-level course credits prior to departure. This dichotomy is used to present information in this report.

Nearly 40% of respondents, regardless of group affiliation, fully achieved their educational objectives by the time they left the College and an equal percentage of respondents from both groups fully achieved their objectives (Table 2).

Table 2

Did you accomplish the educational objectives you set for yourself at CCP?

Response	Long-term Success (LTS)		Short-term Success (STS)	
	%	#	%	#
Yes, Fully	38.8	102	39.3	42
Yes, Partly	40.3	106	33.6	36
No	20.9	55	27.1	29
Total	100	263	100	107

Reason for Discontinued CCP Enrollment

Former students were provided with a list of 15 potential barriers to their continued enrollment and asked to select the listed circumstances that applied to their situation. The potential barriers to enrollment were a balance of CCP and non-CCP related items. The six CCP barriers centered on the challenging nature of the academic experience and program and course accessibility. Non-CCP barriers include financial issues; responsibilities related to both family and job; and illness. The format of this survey item was as follows:

**Please explain why you discontinued your enrollment at the College
(Check all that apply)**

- CCP did not meet my expectations
- CCP courses were too challenging
- CCP courses were not challenging enough
- Could not get into program of choice
- Inconvenient class locations
- Course unavailability

- Continuing my education was not a priority
- Unwilling to take on additional student loans
- Could not afford the expense
- Employment responsibilities
- Family responsibilities
- Illness
- Other personal problem

- Other

Several of the *Other* barriers provided by respondents were similar in content to listed items but several unique categories of responses did emerge resulting in the addition of *Moved* and *Guest/Transfer Student* to the non-CCP barriers and *Poor Customer Service* to the list of CCP items.

Since respondents had the option of selecting multiple reasons for discontinuing their enrollment, the first analytical steps were determining the magnitude and general nature of barriers to continued enrollment. Quantitatively speaking, the level of barriers that interfered with the full achievement of respondent's educational goals at the College was modest (Table 3). Over half (56%) of STS respondents and 44% of LTS respondents cited a single barrier indicating, at least on the surface, straightforward interventions might effectively remove the barrier and encourage continued enrollment at the College.

Less than 22% of the STS former students and 27% of the LTS former students reported a more complex set of issues (3 or more) that led to their decision to drop-out. For these students, institutional responses to encourage greater persistence need to be multi-dimensional.

Table 3
Number of Barriers to Continued Enrollment at CCP

# of Barriers to Enrollment	Long-term Success (LTS)		Short-term Success (STS)	
	%	#	%	#
1	44.1	67	55.7	34
2	28.9	44	23.0	14
3	17.1	26	8.2	5
4	6.6	10	8.2	5
5	3.3	5	3.3	2
6	-	-	1.6	1
Total	100	152	100	61

Table 4 provides information related to the internal and external nature of the barriers cited by respondents. Nearly equal proportions of both groups cited non-CCP barriers solely while 22.4% of the LTS group and 18.3% of the STS group indicated it was CCP factors alone that interfered with the achievement of their educational goals. Few respondents cited a mix of CCP and non-CCP barriers.

Table 4
Nature of Barriers to Continued Enrollment at CCP

Nature of Barriers	Long-term Success (LTS)		Short-term Success (STS)	
	%	#	%	#
Non-CCP	61.8	94	60.0	36
CCP	22.4	34	18.3	11
Mixed	15.8	24	21.7	13
Total	100	152	100	60

Table 5 provides greater detail about the nature of the barriers. Since respondents were permitted to designate multiple barriers, the # in the table represents the number of times the item was cited. The overall pattern of responses across the two student groups is fairly similar. Among the LTS group, affordability and family responsibilities were cited most frequently. For the STS group these were the second most frequently cited barriers with employment responsibilities occurring most frequently.

Table 5
Barriers to Continued Enrollment at CCP

	Long-term Success (LTS)		Short-term Success (STS)	
	%	#	%	
CCP-related barrier				
CCP did not meet my expectations	8.8	26	8.8	10
CCP courses were too challenging	1.3	4	4.4	5
CCP courses were not challenging enough	3.0	9	3.5	4
Could not get into program of choice	4.0	12	4.4	5
Inconvenient class locations	4.7	14	3.5	4
Course unavailability	9.1	27	8.0	9
Poor customer service	3.7	11	3.5	4
Non-CCP barrier				
Continuing my education was not a priority	2.7	8	1.8	2
Unwilling to take on additional student loans	7.1	21	5.3	6
Could not afford the expense	15.5	46	13.3	15
Employment responsibilities	9.8	29	16.8	19
Family responsibilities	13.8	41	13.3	15
Illness	4.4	13	3.5	4
Other personal problem	8.1	24	7.1	8
Guest Student/Transferred	3.0	9	1.8	2
Moved	1.0	3	0.9	1

Among CCP-related barriers, the lack of available courses was cited frequently as was the non-descript response that CCP did not meet my expectations. Unfortunately, this latter response is difficult to translate into action. Fortunately, another open-ended survey item elicited more detailed responses that will be more helpful in informing institutional discussions around student persistence issues.

Suggested Areas for Improvement

Respondents were asked *What could the College have done to encourage you to continue your education at CCP?* The comments to this question, which were edited sparingly, appear in Table 6. As the responses to this question are reviewed, bear in mind

that respondents have not been enrolled at CCP since spring or fall 2006. Consequently, these respondents may have experienced processes or services that have been redesigned since their departure from the College. However, in some cases, this will not have been the case and respondent feedback may be helpful in shaping initiatives to encourage greater levels of persistence at the College. The following are several summary observations about the nature of the feedback but the most effective approach for analyzing respondents' concerns is to simply read the list of comments in the table.

While there were a few scattered comments about the quality of classroom instruction, responses related to academic issues primarily clustered around course and program unavailability. Obviously, some barriers are easier to remedy than others. For example, providing the opportunity to earn a baccalaureate degree at CCP would require more institutional time and effort than would scheduling broader course selection at regional centers or during weekends. In the end, efforts directed toward the latter might be more effective in terms of encouraging a larger group of students to enroll for a greater number of courses at the College.

As in past surveys, quite a few comments clustered around customer service issues related to unresponsive staff; poor staff attitudes; and the inability to locate answers to questions. Respondents were most likely to volunteer that the registration, financial aid and payment processes were difficult to navigate but several students also provided comments associated with their experiences within the advising and counseling realm. Redesigning facilities to provide a 'one-stop shop' will hopefully streamline these business processes and provide a more efficient experience for students.

Finally, several respondents indicated that they would have benefited from lower tuition and fees; and financial planning services to help them explore methods for financing their education.

Table 6
What could the College have done to encourage you to continue your education at CCP?

Customer Service/College Processes

Be more courteous
Be more organized.
Be more understanding
CCP administrative staff (registrar, financial aid, and bursar) could have worked on their organizational and interpersonal skills.
CCP staff could have been more supportive and encouraging.
Cut down or minimize bureaucracy
I wanted a waiver for one course but the head of that department would not give it to me. Because of that I had too many classes to take.
Improve your registration systems as well as your staff.
Make registering/enrollment easier. It's too time consuming.
More help in answering my questions
More respect when seeking information.
Not charge me for a class that I know I dropped on time but CCP said that I didn't drop on time.
I would not recommend my worst enemy.
Improve the attitude and increase the number of people that students can call for assistance.
Support staff leave a lot to be desired
Take off the F that was for a class I never attended.
To make the registration faster and less time consuming.
Train the staff in customer service. They are very rude.
When I called no one could give me information on when the labs were scheduled for the class.
Actually be able to talk to someone on the phone
Could have helped a lot more
Less bureaucratic, more encouraging atmosphere more interest in education.
Made it more accessible to register for classes.
Registration is a nightmare process. If it was simple, I'd probably take 1 class a semester.
Understand that without the students there would be no school. Do not be too busy to help students.
Get rid of some of the ignorant staff in Financial Aid
Hire a more professional financial aid staff.
Improve the financial aid office workers.

Try treating people who stand in line for 2 hours at financial aid with some respect and loose the attitude.
Wait until grants come in and allow students to keep their classes because the grant money is on the way.
They skipped me from registering because I have a balance on my account, I would have paid it with my Grant money if they did allow me to register for class.
Allow students time to look for tuition loans instead of forcing certain kinds
Could have been more helpful with financial aid and stop making me take unnecessary courses.
Financial Aid office destroyed my future because it dropped my classes last time. I had not enough money in my account to cover tuition so I hadn't any job at that time just work-study.
Help single parent (mother) complete financial obligation (longer payment plan)
I feel that CCP could have helped me with a schedule to make payment arrangements to pay of my debt.
Informed me of my options. I was ill and should have been reimbursed. I was robbed
Managed financial aid better
Setting up payment plans for tuition (making it available as an option for those ineligible for aid)
Better payment plan.
Help me more as a person and not a pay check.
Maybe contact me after missing a semester and asking if there is a reason why not in school. I would say I completed my objectives. Then you could find out the level I completed and inform me of what the school offers for the next level either for a student or a working adult.
Provided more sensitive staff, more sensitivity to students with disabilities
Send out course info online.
Maybe advertise so more people know about courses and can enroll.

Financial Issues

Cheaper credits
Discount credits.
Offer free courses
Free graduation (no fees)
Funding, work-study courses, lowered tuition
Keep tuition cost down.
Less tuition fees.
Let students know the complete cost of attending classes.
Lower the prices for international students.
More financial support
Offer more financial assistance for adult students.
Financial problems.
Free tuition
Lower tuition or offer tuition assistance
Lower the cost of books and lab fees.
CCP could solve the problems of financial aid and facilitated the continuing of education for low income student like me.
Better financial aid
Better financial aid assistance.
Assisted with financial aid.
Allow financial assistance for three credit courses.
Allow me to have a payment plan for 3 credits
Help me more with financial aid
Help me re-apply for loans.
Helped with a scholarship. My grades were excellent.
Informed me about financial aid rules.
It could have waived my case since I did not receive financial aid my whole academic career at CCP.
Offer more financial assistance for adult students.
Offer more scholarships and funding for single women without children, of a mature age.
I need financial aid to continue my education.

Academic Service

Better counselors that lead you in the right direction.
It would be helpful to be a little more informed about courses that might be helpful when you are undecided
Better counseling from the staff
Better academic advising
Better communication with an advisor
Assist me with making the right course selections.
Have more counselors available
Help me solve problems academic advising caused
The counselor was very mean, and uninformed.
Assign an advisor
Provide counseling for working adults
Took more of an interest. My advisor retired. I didn't know who to call. Always got transferred to a voice message. No one called me back. Discouraging.
Have teachers that know what they are doing
Need more tutors for anatomy and physiology.
Make classes easier to understand
Make sure the instructors do not assume students know about the new course. We are trying to learn.
More experienced willing educators.
Offer more variety in math department in relation to professors.
Provide more support for seasoned students. The college professors are too one-sided and biased in their teaching methods. I had a problem with that. Both sides of any issues should always be displayed. The professors are too lenient with the young students.
Smaller classes, better instructors.
Who do you complain to when you feel your teacher is not effective
I failed English (dropped) because I couldn't understand the teacher.
The college can help me with more tutors.
The instructors can stop being so prejudiced

Program Issues

Accept me into the nursing program
Help me get into the desired program
I do not have a need for two Associate Degrees. They should offer a Certificate for Paralegal Studies.
I was not accepted in the nursing program so I went somewhere else
Quicker response to specific program enrollment
The program I was in was not available at the time
Offer business certificates and finance
Provide an Associates Program online
Become accredited as a four-year university with the credentials of Penn, Drexel, Villanova, etc...
Get an accelerated degree program BA/MA
Offer a Master's in Physician Assistant.
I need a 4 year degree plus a master's degree.
Offer a 4 yr BSN nursing program
Offer a BA degree in Social Work or Human Services
Offer a bachelor's degree
Offer a Bachelor's Program
Offer BA programs
Offer BSN program for nurses
RN-> BSN make more convenient
Offer an accelerated BS in Nursing program
They could have offered a BSN nursing program, not just an associate degree.
Have an internship program with companies

Course Issues

Actually run the courses in sequence for the ASL/Eng INT. program - I was offered one class per year
Add more courses for nurses. Also, add evening and weekend programs.
Have more courses available.
Bring the nursing program to Northeast campus
By establishing additional classes for those who have to work
CCP should provide some classes on computer programming and database management.
Class availability for part- time students
ECE courses online
Courses on Sunday and weekends and summer sessions.
Give us hands on access for the computer forensics class. Our books came with CD's of the programs we needed but we could not use them.
Have a microbiology lab at other campus.
Have more class choice at NERC
Have more classes at NERC - choice is awful
Have more classes available after business hours and on Saturdays
Hours for mature students and evening courses for mature students.
Offer more courses at the off0campus sites. It is challenging for part-time students who work nights to get to the main campus.
I wish the college would have more distance courses and shorter classes.
I would have liked to taken micro-biology, but the class was only open to students in the nursing program.
I wish you had beginning language courses.
Class availability
Have more courses available at regional centers.
Make paralegal program available to working adults on Saturdays, these classes are not available enough to the working adult.
Make the biology course available whether I sign up on the first day or not.
More choices of classes at NERC
More class availability and better attitudes of teachers
More science courses and availability of times and locations
More variety of classes in music production
Offer alternative health courses
Offer classes wider
Offer more accelerated courses online
Offer the courses in my degree program in the area in which I signed up (Northeast campus), unusually high number of canceled courses. I never knew my schedule until last minute as classes were canceled left and right, improve the attitude and increase the

number of people that students can call for assistance.
Offered classes in a timely fashion - not telling us the program was 2 years and then taking much longer to complete.
Run courses as promised (these were photo classes)
Start a part-time evening nursing program
Have more classes available after business hours and on Saturdays
Courses on Sunday and weekend
Class availability
Course availability in Northeast
Drop some courses and have courses that fit busy parents
I need an opportunity to take an English class at night.
More course selection
More courses at West Philly branch in the morning.
Night courses in languages... Span. 201, 202 Ital 102, 201
Offer classes for seniors
Offer more courses on line.
Offered more "high-level" courses

Transfer/Articulation

I transferred 76 credits to Temple - there was nothing more to do at CCP.
I wanted a BS in Mechanical Engineering and I wouldn't have been able to enter the program I wanted to as a Junior.
Nothing else, I had finished my prereqs for another program.
Nothing, as I was preparing for a BSN program.
Nothing, I was accepted to a four year school.
Nothing. I completed my program then transferred.
Nothing. I needed a credit to get my bachelor degree. Social work at LaSalle University. Financially I was unable to continue at LaSalle.
Nothing. I transferred to receive a Bachelor's degree
Transferred to 4 year university
4 year college was necessary
I was going to another college so I already knew I wasn't staying there
Nothing, I already had my bachelor's and was just preparing for graduate school
Nothing; had to take some additional preqs for nursing. At TJU ASN - could take these classes while taking nursing.
The College did very well with helping me achieve my goals, which were to obtain transfer credits
There was nothing CCP could have done because I was enrolling in another program. However, my education at CCP was excellent and I would absolutely attend CCP for enrichment and continuing ed. courses.
Accept my credits from a 4-year institution. Because of this I couldn't graduate from CCP.
Better transfer packages. Send me off in right path to continue school

Other:

Assess competitive performance of students enrolling.
Have dorms
There is still a stigma going to community college and it does lack campus life (parties, sports)
Send me application or even call me on the phone to discuss the issue
If you could have offered medical benefits at a discount rate