



**Within Our Sights: Toward National Leadership in Higher Education | October 18, 2013**  
**Morning Panel Presentation**  
**Innovative Approaches to Close Achievement Gaps**

**Presenter Contact Information**

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**Campus Project**

**Advantage Program**

The Advantage program at Cape Cod Community College is a TRiO Student Support Services federally funded program under the U.S. Department of Education, established to aid students in graduating from college. We provide comprehensive services to our students, including proactive academic advising, career and transfer counseling, first year success seminar course, financial literacy, peer mentors, personalize tutoring, study /life skills workshop, student advocacy, scholarship and financial aid assistance. We provide these services in an encouraging, caring, supportive, and friendly, environment where our participants learn self-direction, responsibility, and resourcefulness which empowers our students to become life –long learners and productive contributors to our society. Our target population is students who are planning to graduate from CCCC and transfer on to a bachelor's degree program. Students in the Advantage program are low income, first generation, and/or have a documented disability. The support and services we provide help our student overcome these obstacles in their pursuit of higher education.

**Vision Project Outcome Areas**

- ✓ **College Completion**
- ✓ **Closing Achievement Gaps**

**Research and Data**

**Project Duration:** 2010 - 2015

- Serving 175 low-income, first generation, disabled students
- Persistence Rate of 76%
- Good Academic Standing 86%
- Degree or Certificate Awarded 27% (2008 Cohort)
- Degree/Certificate and Transferred to a 4 year institution 16% (2008 Cohort)



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**Campus Project**

**Closing the Achievement Gap for the First Time Cohort at HCC: Building on the Success of Mandatory Orientation and Scaling Up Freshmen Interest Groups for Developmental Level Math and English Completion**

Holyoke Community College has leveraged the Vision Project with its Title III Strengthening Institutions "First Year Experience" grant which includes a specific goal to narrow the achievement gap by September 2014. The numerous initiatives currently being piloted with Title II funds have created an environment of campus "experimentation" largely focused on improving completion and retention rates in developmental Math and English through the development of a small pilot of Freshmen Interest Groups (FIGs) linking remedial courses and credit bearing courses that include enhanced advising and early career focus. In Fall 2012 attendance at New Student Orientation became mandatory for new students (Title III goal) with early data results indicating increased retention while narrowing the achievement gap. Building on these early and limited results, HCC has focused Vision grant projects on further developing pilots aimed at reducing the achievement gap and reducing time spent in remedial coursework. To date these projects include:

- Development of Self Paced Math (Spring 2014 Pilot)
- English 094 studio for students who score just below English 101 placement
- Computer labs for Developmental Math and English instruction
- Math Mini Prep classes offered at no cost to prepare students to retake the CPT

In summer 2013 the Vision project supported the attendance of an HCC team at the National Summer Institute on Learning Communities, resulting in a First Year Linked Course model which is currently under development with an expected pilot date of Fall 2014. The new course model, based on the early success of FIG pilots developed under Title III, will link a developmental level Math, English or English 101 course to an introductory level course in high enrollment programs with the goal of increasing student retention, with required faculty professional development, integrated assignments and assessment as key components.

**Vision Project Outcome Areas**

- ✓ **College Participation**
- ✓ **Closing Achievement Gaps**

## Research and Data

**Project Duration:** *Fall 2011 - Spring 2015*

- The Fall 2012 to Spring 2013 retention rate gap between all FTFTDS White and Hispanic or Latino students narrowed 1 percentage point from the previous year, further narrowing the gap by 3 percentage points since Fall 2010. The Fall 2011 to Fall 2012 retention gap between White and Latino or Hispanic students is 12 percentage points, an increase of 2 percentage points from Fall 2010.
- The Fall 2012 to Spring 2013 retention rate gap between all FTFTDS White and Black or African American students has narrowed 9 percentage points from the previous year, reversing a three year trend of a widening gap. The Fall to Fall retention gap for these students has also steadily narrowed 25 percentage points in Fall 2009 to 14 percentage points in Fall 2011.
- In Fall 2012, New Student Orientation became mandatory for students entering HCC. Accordingly, the number of students attending orientation increased to 97% of the FTFTDS cohort (1,126 students).
- The gap in orientation attendance between FTFTDS White and Minority students decreased from 44 percentage points in Fall 2011 to 26 percentage points in Fall 2012.
- The overall Fall 2012 to Spring 2013 retention rate for those attending orientation is 10 percentage points higher than for those who did not attend orientation and more specifically: 6 percentage points higher for all minority students; 12 percentage points higher for Hispanic or Latino students; 17 percentage points higher for males; 21 percentage points higher for students under 25 years of age.
- A First Year Linked Course model was developed summer 2013 to continue to scale completion rate increases in Developmental Math and Freshmen Interest Group (FIG) pilots: The Spring 2013 Completion rate for all Developmental Math improved 1.1% percentage points over Spring 2012, led by a 9.5 percentage point increase in Math 075 (basic math). The Fall 2012 completion rate for Math 075 in pilot FIGs was 83.3% compared to 51.9% for non FIG sections; for English 085 (Reading and Writing) the completion rate in FIGs was 91.7% compared to 60% for non FIG sections.



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**Campus Project**

**Achieving the Dream project at NECC**

Northern Essex has participated in the national Achieving the Dream (ATD) project since 2007, and we have integrated ATD principles and goals for student success into our last two strategic plans. These goals include broad engagement of administration, faculty, and staff in data-driven projects to identify and find solutions for problems in achieving student success. In 2011, we achieved Leader College status in this project, signifying that we have accumulated at least three years of data showing that our interventions to close achievement gaps for at-risk cohorts of students have resulted in improvement in several measures—notably in college completion, degrees attained, and completion in gateway courses in college-level math with a grade of C or better. As a leader college, we have been asked to mentor other colleges who would like to participate in Achieving the Dream. Also, we were invited to apply for and won a Wal-Mart PRESS grant to extend our ATD efforts at the college. We are now in the second year of the grant, working on projects to expand the scope of our college success course, improve our supplemental instruction sections, expand an early alert program, and begin a program that gives mini-grants to faculty and staff who want to research some aspect of student success at the college. Recently, we have added a Culture and Equity Team to our ATD efforts to address issues that have arisen in our efforts to better serve our ever-increasing Latino population, which constitutes roughly a third of our total student population. We have also added the Transitions to Academic Success team to investigate ways to improve instruction in developmental, ESL and content-level classrooms.

**Vision Project Outcome Areas**

- ✓ **College Completion**
- ✓ **Closing Achievement Gaps**

**Research and Data**

**Project Duration:** *Began in 2007 and continues with grant and institutional funds*

- improvement in course completion from 2007 to 2012 improvements for all students at the college, FTE 4000
- improvements in course completion from 2007 to 2012 for Latino males, a small (under 100) but increasing number
- improvements in completing gateway courses in college-level math for all students, including Latino students
- greater A-C completion rates of courses (72 vs. 64%)(n= 355 vs.2748) for students taking supplemental instruction



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**Campus Project**

**Urban Education Program**

Westfield State University will celebrate the 45th year of our Urban Education Program this year. Founded in 1968, the Program features an intensive summer bridge experience followed by proactive ongoing academic and personal support program that has provided access and opportunity for more than 2000 individuals from the Commonwealth and beyond. First year students from diverse backgrounds are accepted into the University on a conditional basis and must successfully complete a University supported five-week "Bridge" residential program in order to gain full matriculation. The "bridge" experience includes intensive academic support and leadership development. The importance of civic responsibility, networking, critical thinking and career development are introduced to program students during the summer and reinforced during the undergraduate experience. One of the hallmarks of this unique program is the significant involvement of peer and alumni mentors. Students enroll in a variety of courses in the summer that have included including Statistics, Mathematics, Astronomy, Symbolic Logic, American National Government, Cultural Geography and English Writing Workshops. Carefully recruited full-time University faculty teach most of the credit bearing summer courses and provide ongoing support during the undergraduate experience. The 2013 program enrolled 96 students with all but four matriculating in the fall. Total Urban Education enrollment is 256 undergraduates. Three full-time staff support the program, two of whom are Urban Education alumni. A strong Urban Education alumni embrace the program with unique attention to the program motto - "each one teach one, each one reach one." Since 2010 and the discontinuation of McNair funding, Westfield's Urban Education Program has been fully funded through the University state appropriation. Modest private funding has provided for textbook scholarships.

**Vision Project Outcome Areas**

- ✓ **College Participation**
- ✓ **College Completion**
- ✓ **Student Learning**
- ✓ **Preparing Citizens**
- ✓ **Closing Achievement Gaps**

## Research and Data

**Project Duration:** 1968 - present

- Urban Education Program includes 256 undergraduates. 86% of program students are students of color.
- COLLEGE PARTICIPATION/ACCESS | Westfield's enrollment of ethnic minorities has doubled since 2008, increasing from 9% to 17% for incoming first year students. Urban Education students of color total 86% of the cohort and comprise 30% of the day students of color. Recent increases in Urban Education enrollment contribute to our ongoing efforts to diversify our student population.
- COLLEGE PARTICIPATION/ACCESS | Our robust Early Awareness Programs welcome 500 middle and high school students to the campus annually, programs that target college awareness and participation for underrepresented students. In 2013, 30% of the students who attended the Discover Westfield Day enrolled at the University. Half of these participated in the Urban Education Bridge Program and matriculated to the University.
- COLLEGE PARTICIPATION/COMPLETION | Students who would not have received offers of acceptance due to Board of Higher Education admission standards but were provided an opportunity for admission through the Urban Education Program were retained at a rate of 76% since 2010 compared with 80% overall retention.
- COLLEGE COMPLETION | Westfield State University is proud to acknowledge little or no difference in retention and graduation rates for low-income students. In 2011 and 2012, the 6-year graduate rate of PELL vs. Non-Pell eligible students was nearly identical. The first-year retention rate for students who were PELL eligible differed only 4% from non-PELL eligible students.