

Title: Supports for community college students

Date: September 2015

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Question: >> Could you provide information on supports for community college students, including orientation programs, student success courses, student education plans, advising programs, and other supports for retention?

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#### Response:

The purpose of this bibliography is to provide student services resources to community college counselors and administrators. The bibliography might also be useful for community college policymakers seeking to revise their academic advising and orientation programs. The bibliography is divided into five sections:

1. Orientation Programs
2. Student Success Courses
3. Student Education Plans
4. Advising Programs (including online programs)
5. Other Supports for Retention

Note that the categories might overlap, in which case references might appear in more than one category. Citations include a link to a free online version, when available. All citations are accompanied by an abstract, excerpt, or summary written by the author or publisher of the document.

We have not done an evaluation of the methodological rigor of these resources, but provide them for your information only.

## REFERENCES

### Orientation Programs

Bailey, T., & Alfonso, M. (2005). *Paths to persistence: An analysis of research on program effectiveness at community colleges*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/paths-persistence-program-effectiveness.pdf>

*Abstract:* During the last decade, educators and policy-makers have increased their focus on the success of students once they enter community college. As a result, accreditation agencies and state regulators are increasingly scrutinizing measures of student outcomes such as persistence and completion rates. At the same time, national initiatives by foundations and the U.S. Department of Education are focused on developing policy and institutional practices that will improve success rates for community college students. This report has been written as part of the Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count initiative, which is based on the premise that research about and at community colleges must play a central role in any strategy to increase student success. This report presents a critical analysis of the state of the research on the effectiveness of four types of practices in increasing persistence and completion at community colleges: 1) advising, counseling, mentoring and orientation programs; 2) learning communities; 3) developmental education and other services for academically underprepared students; and 4) college-wide reform. We use this analysis to draw lessons about effective institutional practices, identify promising areas for future research, evaluate the state of program-effectiveness research at community colleges, and make recommendations for improving related research.

Boyd, B., Largent, L., & Rondeau, S. (2008). Community college orientation basics: How to structure a new student orientation program. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* at <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Orientation-in-Two-Year-Colleges.aspx>

*Abstract:* Community college environments are often diverse and dynamic places. The American Association of Community Colleges estimates that there are over 6.6 million credit students enrolled in the 1,195 community colleges across the nation. The average age of these community college students is 29. Seventeen percent are single parents, over half are employed full-time, and almost 40 percent are first-generation college students. Indeed, community college students enter higher education with unique needs and complex, hectic lives. Thus, outreach initiatives, such as new student orientation programs, are critical to maximizing these students' opportunities for success. As the student population in community colleges continues to change and grow, the economic resources available to these schools continue to shrink. Therefore, planning and implementation of an orientation program becomes an enormous challenge. This outline is provided as a starting point for those charged with developing or revising an orientation program. Answering these questions will set parameters within which a successful student orientation program can be built.

California Community Colleges Student Services and Special Programs Division. (2013). *California community colleges student success and support program handbook*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from <http://www.deanza.edu/sssp/pdf/sssp handbook.pdf>

*Excerpt:* The purpose of the California Community Colleges' (CCC) Student Success and Support Program Handbook is two-fold. First, it offers the reader an overview of the history and goals of the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP), formerly known as the Matriculation Program.

Second, it provides practical guidance to colleges about core services, program implementation and reporting requirements, including program and budget plans and funding guidelines. The handbook also includes references to important resources, including the relevant sections of the Education Code and title 5 regulations (Appendices A and B). *REL West note:* See section 2.2 on student orientation.

Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2012). *A matter of degrees: Promising practices for community college student success (a first look)*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from [http://www.ccsse.org/docs/matter\\_of\\_degrees.pdf](http://www.ccsse.org/docs/matter_of_degrees.pdf)

*Excerpt:* Community colleges across the country have created innovative, data-informed programs that are models for educating underprepared students, engaging traditionally underserved students, and helping students from all backgrounds succeed. However, because most of these programs have limited scope, the field now has pockets of success rather than widespread improvement. Turning these many small accomplishments into broad achievement—and improved completion rates—depends on bringing effective programs to scale. To meet this challenge while facing shrinking budgets and rising enrollment, colleges must be certain that all of their resources—time and money—are being spent on educational practices that work for all students. But what makes a practice effective? And how can colleges identify the mix of practices they should use to close achievement gaps so all students succeed? To help colleges answer these questions, the Center for Community College Student Engagement has launched a special initiative, Identifying and Promoting High-Impact Educational Practices in Community Colleges. This report presents the initiative’s preliminary findings. *REL West note:* See page 8 for section on student orientation.

Cooper, D., Rodriguez-Kiino, D., Scharper, A., Karandjeff, K., Chaplot, P., Schiorring, E., & Taylor, S. (2014). *Practically speaking. Community college practices that help (re)define student support: A practitioner primer*. Berkeley, CA: Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from [http://rpgroup.org/sites/default/files/PractitionerPrimer\\_Spring2014.pdf](http://rpgroup.org/sites/default/files/PractitionerPrimer_Spring2014.pdf)

*Excerpt:* The RP Group has engaged multiple stakeholders—administrators, faculty and instructional deans, counselors and other student services professionals, trustees and students—with the study’s findings and themes over the life of this project. Throughout this process, community college educators repeatedly asked for more concrete examples of how to realize what the students in Student Support (Re)defined said they need to succeed. This resource responds to these practitioner requests, offering specific institutional and statewide efforts, programmatic approaches and individual practices that demonstrate the five key themes emerging from the Student Support (Re)defined research. By definition, a “primer” can help “[get] you ready for what comes next.” In turn, we also designed this resource to promote individual reflection on and inspire community dialog about these examples with the intention of promoting innovation and change. To that end, this resource provides real-world insights about how individuals and programs have launched and sustained—and in some cases expanded and replicated—initiatives designed to strengthen support at their institutions and across the state.

Derby, D. C., & Smith, T. (2004). An orientation course and community college retention. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 28, 763–773.

*Abstract:* Orientation and retention programs are common in institutions of higher education. The potential association between orientation programs and student retention, particularly within the community college sector, has long been neglected. This study presents an institutional view of a potential associative relationship between an orientation course and student retention measures. A chi-square analysis revealed a significant association among orientation program, student completion of degree, student retention, and student enrollment and persistence.

Ellis-O'Quinn, A. (2012). An ex post facto study of first-year student orientation as an indicator of student success at a community college. *Inquiry*, 17(1), 51–57. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ974774.pdf>

*Abstract:* While community colleges do an excellent job of fulfilling their open door mission, research shows that the completion rate for community college students is dismal. One retention strategy often employed by community colleges is providing support through orientation programs. A great deal of research has focused on orientation at the four-year level, but a major deficit exists in examining orientation at the community college level. There is a lack of current research, especially at the community college level, to indicate whether orientation programs are achieving desired results. The purpose of this ex post facto study is to determine if a relationship exists between certain student success indicators such as GPA, and retention for students completing an orientation course in their first semester at a rural community college. In addition, the study will attempt to identify the impact of course delivery format on success measures.

Hanover Research. (2014). *Best practices in retention at community colleges*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from <http://www.mercedregionalgateway.org/resources/Best%20Practices%20in%20Retention%20at%20Community%20Colleges.pdf>

*Abstract:* In the following report, Hanover Research identifies best practices for improving retention at community colleges. The report provides a review of the research literature regarding retention best practices as well as a series of program profiles of exemplary programs. *REL West note:* See page 12 for section on student orientation.

Hatch, D. K., & Bohlig, E. M. (2015). An empirical typology of the latent programmatic structure of community college student success programs. *Research in Higher Education*, 1–27.

*Abstract:* The definition and description of student success programs in the literature (e.g., orientation, first-year seminars, learning communities, etc.) suggests underlying programmatic similarities. Yet researchers to date typically depend on ambiguous labels to delimit studies, resulting in loosely related but separate research lines and few generalizable findings. To demonstrate whether or how certain programs are effective there is need for more coherent conceptualizations to identify and describe programs. This is particularly problematic for community colleges where success programs are uniquely tailored relative to other sectors. The study's purpose is to derive an empirical typology of community college student success programs based on their curricular and programmatic features. Data come from 1,047 success programs at 336 U.S.-based respondents to the Community College Institutional Survey. Because programs might be characterized by their focus in different curricular areas and combinations of foci, we used factor mixture modeling, a hybrid of factor analysis and latent class analysis, which provides a model-based classification method that simultaneously accounts for dimensional and categorical data structures. Descriptive findings revealed extensive commonalities among nominal program types. Inferential analysis revealed five factors (types) of program elements, combined in unique ways among four latent program types: success skills programs, comprehensive programs, collaborative academic programs, and minimalist programs. We illustrate how the typology deconstructs nominal categories, may help unify different bodies of research, and affords a common framework and language for researchers and practitioners to identify and conceptualize programs based on what they do rather than by their names.

Hollins, T. N., Jr. (2009). Examining the impact of a comprehensive approach to student orientation. *Inquiry*, 14(1), 15–27. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ833916.pdf>

*Abstract:* Perhaps one of the most underemphasized strategies for achieving student success within the community college is the development and implementation of an intentional, comprehensive approach to orienting new students to the college environment. Orientation can be considered as any effort by an institution to help students make a successful transition from their previous environment into the collegiate experience. The goals for such programs may include academic preparation, personal adjustment, and increasing awareness of students and parents during the transition process. Although orientation programs have been part of the higher-education landscape for more than one century, it was not until recent decades that these types of programs have gained in popularity and numbers. Institutions of higher education realize the value of these programs in addressing transitional issues for the many types of students enrolling in higher education. In this article, the author presents research on the benefits of providing students with more than one form of orientation to college.

Jones, K. R. (2013). Developing and implementing a mandatory online student orientation. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 17(1), 43–45. Retrieved on August 17, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1011381.pdf>

*Abstract:* A rural Community College evaluated their procedures for preparing students for online courses and determined they were not meeting the needs of the students. Through the use of the ADDIE Model of Instructional Design, a mandatory online orientation for first time online/hybrid students was developed and implemented. Results from the implementation indicate that after completing the orientation, students feel they are better prepared for their online courses. This result is backed up by an increase in online student retention.

Miller, M. T., & Pope, M. L. (2003). Integrating technology into new student orientation programs at community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 27(1), 15–33.

*Abstract:* The higher education industry is increasingly technologically pervasive. Reports of required personal computer purchases or the outright awarding of computers to new students provide examples of the expectations institutions have for students. Little focus, however, has been placed on the preparedness of new college students to cope with the technologically driven campus. This may be particularly true on community college campuses where non-traditional students comprise a large percentage of the students. The current study identifies strategies for the exposure of new students to technology during new student orientation programs. Surveying senior student affairs officers in community colleges, institutional email accounts, and emphasizing the importance of technology were identified as potentially effective measures for integrating technology exposure and education into new student orientations.

Rockingham Community College. (2013). *Student success through orientation, advising, & relationships: A quality enhancement plan*. Wentworth, NC: Author. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from [http://www.rockinghamcc.edu/docs/RCC\\_QEP.pdf](http://www.rockinghamcc.edu/docs/RCC_QEP.pdf)

*Excerpt:* RCC's 2013–2018 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focuses on implementing a first-year experience including intentional advising in a centralized Advising Center, an orientation program, and a college student success class. The mission of our QEP is to enhance student learning by teaching students how to develop educational goals and by providing services that will help them to achieve these goals. The QEP goals are to teach students to develop comprehensive educational plans of study that fit with their interests, abilities, and values; to teach students strategies for academic success; and to teach students to build relationships with their advisor and the campus community. Our overarching institutional goal is to provide students with the tools necessary to persist at RCC.

## **Student Success Courses**

This section includes studies of student success courses in California, New York, North Carolina, and Virginia.

Cho, S. W., & Karp, M. M. (2012). *Student success courses and educational outcomes at Virginia community colleges* (CCRC Working Paper No. 40). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/student-success-courses-outcomes-virginia.html>

*Abstract:* Using data from the Virginia Community College System and building upon prior Florida-based research, this working paper examines whether student success course enrollment has positive associations with shorter term student outcomes, including earning any college credits within the first year and persisting into the second year. The study finds that students who enrolled in a student success course in the first semester were more likely to earn college-level credits within the first year and were more likely to persist to the second year. The study also finds that students who were referred to developmental education were more likely to earn college-level credits within the first year if they enrolled in a student success course in their first term. A journal article based on this paper, titled “Student Success Courses in the Community College: Early Enrollment and Educational Outcomes,” was published in the *Community College Review*.

Karp, M. M., Raufman, J., Efthimiou, C., & Ritze, N. (2015). *Redesigning a student success course for sustained impact: Early outcomes findings*. New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/redesigning-student-success-course-sustained-impact.html>

*Abstract:* Many community colleges offer a “student success” course—also known as College 101 or Introduction to College—as a means to help incoming students transition to college and become successful. The typical course is meant to provide key information and address important noncognitive skills and behavioral expectations with the goal of familiarizing students with the college environment and giving them the tools they need to build important competencies, persist in college, and earn a credential. This paper examines the efforts of Bronx Community College in implementing a redesigned student success course called First Year Seminar (FYS), which is intended to better support students than a typical student success course by incorporating academic content, skill-building exercises, and applied teaching pedagogies, among other features, into the course. Based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis, this study finds that FYS participation is associated with positive student outcomes that appear to be sustained for a longer period of time than what is typically found for students taking a traditional student success course. The focus of FYS on student-centered pedagogy and on integrated course content appears to be beneficial. The findings also suggest that when students have the opportunity to practice student success and basic academic skills within the context of an improved student success course, they are likely to apply those skills in future courses, potentially increasing their long-term educational attainment.

Rutschow, E. Z., Cullinan, D., & Welbeck, R. (2012). *Keeping students on course: An impact study of a student success course at Guilford Technical Community College*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from <http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/Keeping%20Students%20on%20Course%20Full%20Report.pdf>

*Abstract:* Improving the success of academically underprepared students who are in need of developmental (or remedial) education is a key challenge facing community colleges today. Many of these students enter college with little awareness of these institutions’ expectations or a clear

model for how to make effective decisions about their academic careers. To help students address these challenges, a number of colleges across the country have looked to success courses (also called study skills, student development, or new student orientation courses). This report analyzes a success course for developmental education students at Guilford Technical Community College in Greensboro, North Carolina, and its impact on students' psychosocial skills and behaviors and academic achievement. After joining Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count in 2004, a national organization designed to mentor colleges through an institutionwide, student success-oriented improvement process, Guilford chose to offer a revised version of its student success course to developmental education students, aimed at improving psychosocial awareness and academic achievement. Modeled on Skip Downing's *On Course* philosophy and curriculum, it placed an intensive focus on changing students' behaviors and attitudes, including increasing their awareness of their and others' emotions, understanding their own learning styles, improving time management skills, and recognizing their responsibility for their own learning. Guilford hoped that these changes in students' personal habits and behaviors might help them take better control of their academic lives, which would ultimately result in gains in achievement. This study employed random assignment methodology to examine the impact of Guilford's success course.

Scrivener, S., Sommo, C., & Collado, H. (2009). *Getting back on track: Effects of a community college program for probationary students*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved on August 19, 2015, from <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/514/overview.html>

*Abstract:* Community colleges are often hailed as open-access institutions, and, arguably, no state has done more to ensure access than California. Unfortunately, community college completion rates are dismally low, in part because many students are underprepared for college-level work. In fact, tens of thousands of students in California are on probation, owing to poor grades or inadequate academic progress, or both, and face a high risk of not graduating. To date, little research has been done on how to help such students get back into good standing. As part of MDRC's multisite Opening Doors demonstration, Chaffey College, a large community college in Southern California, ran two versions of a program that was designed to improve outcomes among students who are on probation. Both versions offered a "College Success" course, taught by a college counselor, which provided basic information on study skills and the requirements of college. As part of the course, students were expected to visit the college's "Success Centers"—which were established at Chaffey in response to the school's recognition that many of its entering students were not prepared for college-level work, and where students could receive supplementary individualized or group instruction in math, reading, and writing. The original program, called "Opening Doors," was a one-semester, voluntary program. The other version, called "Enhanced Opening Doors" in this report, was a two-semester program, in which students were told that they were required to take the College Success course. MDRC collaborated with the college to evaluate Opening Doors and Enhanced Opening Doors. In 2005, students were randomly assigned either to a program group that was eligible for Opening Doors or to a control group that received standard college courses and services. Any subsequent substantial differences between the program and control groups' academic outcomes can be attributed to Opening Doors. In 2006, a second group of students was randomly assigned to estimate the impacts of Enhanced Opening Doors. This report describes the findings for both programs...Following the study, Chaffey committed to institutionalizing a revised version of Enhanced Opening Doors to more fully implement and enforce the college's probation and dismissal policies, and built upon its experiences in the Opening Doors demonstration to develop a voluntary program, called "Smart Start," for new students who are at risk of experiencing difficulties.

Weiss, M., Brock, T., Sommo, C., Rudd, T., & Turner, M. C. (2011). *Serving community college students on probation: Four year findings from Chaffey College's Opening Doors program*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from [http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full\\_506.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_506.pdf)

*Excerpt:* Community colleges across the United States face a difficult challenge. On the one hand, they are “open access” institutions, with a mission to serve students from all backgrounds and at varying levels of college readiness. On the other hand, they must uphold high academic standards in order to maintain accreditation and prepare students for employment or transfer to four-year schools. How, then, can community colleges best serve students who want to learn but do not meet minimum academic standards? Chaffey College, a large community college located about 40 miles east of Los Angeles, began to wrestle with this question early in the twenty-first century. Under the auspices of a national demonstration project called Opening Doors, Chaffey developed a program designed to increase probationary students’ chances of succeeding in college. Chaffey’s program included a “College Success” course, taught by a counselor, which provided basic information on study skills and the requirements of college. As part of the course, students were expected to complete five visits to “Success Centers,” where their assignments, linked to the College Success course, covered skills assessment, learning styles, time management, use of resources, and test preparation. In 2005, MDRC collaborated with Chaffey College to evaluate the one-semester, voluntary Opening Doors program. In 2006, the program was improved to form the two-semester Enhanced Opening Doors program, in which probationary students were told that they were required to take the College Success course. In MDRC’s evaluation of each program, students were randomly assigned either to a program group that had the opportunity to participate in the program or to a control group that received the college’s standard courses and services. This report presents the outcomes for both groups of students in the Enhanced Opening Doors evaluation for four years after they entered the study.

### **Student Education Plans**

This section includes recommendations from California, as well as descriptions of student education plans in action in Florida and North Carolina.

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. (2012). *The role of counseling faculty and delivery of counseling services in the California Community Colleges*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved on August 21, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED546760.pdf>

*Abstract:* The original paper, *The role of counseling faculty in the California Community Colleges* (1994), provided principled positions of the Academic Senate regarding the essential functions of counselors and the delivery of counseling services in helping students achieve success. The paper concluded with specific guidance on appropriate roles for paraprofessionals, and an appendix addressed the role of faculty advisors. Much of the content from the original paper remains in this version because, nearly 30 years after the 1986 Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act, it is still compelling and necessary for ensuring quality educational experiences for students and useful for local senates in crafting initiatives to improve student success. Some of the Title 5 regulation language has been removed, as legislation pertaining to matriculation is under revision at this time due to the Board of Governors’ 2012 endorsement of the Student Success Task Force Recommendations. Added to the paper is a description of education plans and a section on technology and online counseling, and the sections on paraprofessionals and faculty advisors have been incorporated into the body of the paper rather than included as appendices. Summary recommendations have also been included in this revision. The purposes of this paper are threefold. First, it clarifies the role of the counseling discipline and provides a description of a comprehensive student education plan in the California Community College system. Second, it provides a foundation for discussion of the uses and restrictions of paraprofessionals in the

delivery of counseling services. Third, it offers updates on minimum qualifications, the use of faculty advisors, and current trends in technological tools and online counseling, as well as a chronology of funding patterns and legislative activity to date, that provide a more wide-ranging perspective of how the profession of counseling has evolved—or not—since 1994. Sample education plans are appended.

Rockingham Community College. (2013). *Student success through orientation, advising, & relationships: A quality enhancement plan*. Wentworth, NC: Author. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from [http://www.rockinghamcc.edu/docs/RCC\\_QEP.pdf](http://www.rockinghamcc.edu/docs/RCC_QEP.pdf)

*Excerpt:* RCC's 2013–2018 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focuses on implementing a first-year experience including intentional advising in a centralized Advising Center, an orientation program, and a college student success class. The mission of our QEP is to enhance student learning by teaching students how to develop educational goals and by providing services that will help them to achieve these goals. The QEP goals are to teach students to develop comprehensive educational plans of study that fit with their interests, abilities, and values; to teach students strategies for academic success; and to teach students to build relationships with their advisor and the campus community. Our overarching institutional goal is to provide students with the tools necessary to persist at RCC.

Romano, J., & Shugart, S. (2006). Lifemap: A learning-centered system for student success. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30(2), 141–143.

*Abstract:* This article describes “LifeMap,” a development advising system at Valencia Community College in Orlando, Florida. The LifeMap system focuses on career and educational planning and student/faculty/staff engagement. It integrates all college faculty, staff, and resources into a unified system to focus student attention on developing career and educational plans. The system also helps students in connecting with the resources of the college (people and programs) for assistance in completing those plans. Valencia’s programs and services have been realigned to support LifeMap’s 5-stage conceptual model. This model describes ideal student progression towards self-sufficiency based on selected developmental theory. A professionally developed marketing campaign promotes LifeMap to students, and all of the college’s written materials have been redesigned to support LifeMap. (See also a PowerPoint on LifeMap at [https://www.dcccd.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/DCCCD/Docs/Departments/DO/EduAff/Retention/GeneralDocs/Romano\\_%20LifeMap.pdf](https://www.dcccd.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/DCCCD/Docs/Departments/DO/EduAff/Retention/GeneralDocs/Romano_%20LifeMap.pdf))

### **Advising Programs**

This section includes articles and studies on advising programs, including the role of advisors, the kinds of advising that are important, and advising for particular groups of students.

Allen, J. M., Smith, C. L., & Muehleck, J. K. (2013). What kinds of advising are important to community college pre- and post-transfer students? *Community College Review*, 41(4), 330–345.

*Abstract:* Educators assert that academic advising before and after transferring enhances the success of baccalaureate degree-seeking students who begin at community colleges. Yet, there is little research that investigates the kinds of advising that are differentially important to pre- versus post-transfer students. In this study, we examined the importance ascribed to 12 advising functions by two groups: (a) students enrolled at two community colleges who intended to transfer to 4-year institutions and (b) students enrolled at five universities who had transferred from one of the study community colleges. Pretransfer students differed significantly from post-transfer students in their ratings of 7 of the 12 functions. Results highlight the kinds of advising that are particularly

important to pretransfer students, as well as advising functions that are highly valued by both groups. Implications for advising practices at 2- and 4-year institutions are discussed.

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. (2012). *The role of counseling faculty and delivery of counseling services in the California Community Colleges*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved on August 21, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED546760.pdf>

*Abstract:* The original paper, *The role of counseling faculty in the California Community Colleges* (1994), provided principled positions of the Academic Senate regarding the essential functions of counselors and the delivery of counseling services in helping students achieve success. The paper concluded with specific guidance on appropriate roles for paraprofessionals, and an appendix addressed the role of faculty advisors. Much of the content from the original paper remains in this version because, nearly 30 years after the 1986 Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act, it is still compelling and necessary for ensuring quality educational experiences for students and useful for local senates in crafting initiatives to improve student success. Some of the Title 5 regulation language has been removed, as legislation pertaining to matriculation is under revision at this time due to the Board of Governors' 2012 endorsement of the Student Success Task Force Recommendations. Added to the paper is a description of education plans and a section on technology and online counseling, and the sections on paraprofessionals and faculty advisors have been incorporated into the body of the paper rather than included as appendices. Summary recommendations have also been included in this revision. The purposes of this paper are threefold. First, it clarifies the role of the counseling discipline and provides a description of a comprehensive student education plan in the California Community College system. Second, it provides a foundation for discussion of the uses and restrictions of paraprofessionals in the delivery of counseling services. Third, it offers updates on minimum qualifications, the use of faculty advisors, and current trends in technological tools and online counseling, as well as a chronology of funding patterns and legislative activity to date, that provide a more wide-ranging perspective of how the profession of counseling has evolved—or not—since 1994. Sample education plans are appended.

Cruise, C. A. (2002). Advising students on academic probation. *The mentor*. Retrieved on August 19, 2015, from [www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/021028cc.htm](http://www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/021028cc.htm)

*Excerpt:* Embarrassment, disappointment, and desolation can be felt by a student who has failed to meet the academic requirements of his or her institution. Imagine experiencing all of these emotions and not knowing how to get back on track. Probationary students are just one of many student populations that academic advisers encounter on a regular basis. At my institution, some departments have special programs in place to work with probationary students, but others—because of adviser caseloads or other factors—have not yet established an official program to assist these students. Whether or not your department or institution has a program in place does not negate the fact that probationary students desperately need help. This paper will offer some suggestions on how to work with this population.

Danis, E. J. (2002). Don't give up on academically dismissed students. *The mentor*. Retrieved on August 19, 2015, from [www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/020206ed.htm](http://www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/020206ed.htm)

*Excerpt:* One of the most work-intensive tasks of the academic adviser is assisting students who have been dismissed from an institution for poor scholarship. These students are usually distraught, dejected, and bewildered when they come to see you—and they always come to see you. More often than not, they do not understand why this has happened to them, despite the fact that the institution probably forewarned them. Such an advising situation can be compared to grief therapy, because these students can be in a stage of denial, anger, or resignation. If they are in denial or anger, you need to help them work through it somehow. If they are resigned to giving up and leaving the institution or higher education entirely, you need to give them some hope. This

article is about finding hope and an optimistic prognosis for students confronting the ugly reality that they “flunked out.”

Higgins, E. M. (2003). Advising students on probation. Retrieved on August 18, 2015, from the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* website at <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advising-students-on-probation.aspx>

*Excerpt:* Clearly students don't enter college with an educational plan that includes being placed on academic probation but, as professionals who work with students who find themselves having difficulty, we know it happens all the time. While it is our hope that, with support, students will be able to repair their academic situation, become successful and persist to graduation, sometimes the situation cannot successfully be repaired and results in being placed on academic probation. The category of probation is an academic warning for students whose academic performance falls below an institution's requirement of good standing. If academic difficulty continues, it is possible for a student to be suspended or dismissed. In support of the student, advisors often work with them to develop a plan for success. To do this they must work in partnership and understand the causes of the current situation, identify what needs to change, and implement the plan.

Karp, M. M. (2013). *Entering a program: Helping students make academic and career decisions* (CCRC Working Paper No. 59, Assessment of Evidence Series). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/entering-a-program-academic-and-career-decisions.html>

*Abstract:* This literature review examines the evidence on student decision making in the community college, focusing on the activities most relevant to students' entry into programs of study—academic and career planning. Although there is a large body of theoretical discussion and empirical evidence on potentially effective approaches to guidance and counseling, a review of current advising and counseling practices reveals barriers to effective implementation of these approaches on community college campuses. As currently structured, community college advising is limited in its ability to assist students in identifying career goals and academic pathways that will help them achieve those goals. The literature reviewed in this paper points to four broad principles to guide restructuring efforts:

- Program pathways should balance structure with exploration.
- Career counseling should drive an integrated approach to advising.
- Colleges should provide services to students based on their level of need.
- Colleges should strategically deploy resources to allow for developmental advising.

Karp, M. M., & Stacey, G. W. (2013). *Designing a system for strategic advising*. New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/designing-a-system-for-strategic-advising.pdf>

*Excerpt:* Students attending community colleges are faced with a variety of complex procedures and decisions. They must not only navigate financial aid applications and registration but also choose the type of credential they will pursue, their major (often from among hundreds) and the courses they will enroll in (often from among thousands). At the same time, they must take into account how course choices serve their long-term goals as well as their immediate logistical needs; for instance, some courses may count for financial aid purposes but not for graduation, or for graduation but not transfer. For many community college students—a significant portion of whom are the first in their family to attend college—these tasks appear to be insurmountable hurdles. The sheer number of choices students face can lead them to stumble. Students may waste time and

money on unnecessary courses; they may miss a financial aid deadline. These stumbles can contribute to a sense that they do not “belong” in college. Advisors help students make choices in a complex environment, often by explaining the costs and benefits of each available option, and they guide students to additional resources that will help them make good decisions.

King, M. C. (2002). Community college advising. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* website at <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Two-year-college-advising.aspx>

*Excerpt:* Probably the key difference in advising at community colleges is the nature of our student population—predominantly first generation, commuter, underprepared and diverse in all ways including age, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic background. This means that advisors often need to focus on the basics—what is a credit, what does it mean to be matriculated, how do you create a class schedule, how should I manage my time, etc. When dealing with the underprepared student, a significant amount of time must be spent explaining the need for developmental course work—courses the student must take in addition to the degree requirements—and convincing the student that those courses are necessary. Because most of our students are working and/or have families, their time on campus is limited and their time for meeting with an advisor is limited as well. Consequently, the time spent with an advisee typically focuses on the practical rather than the philosophical. In addition, for the same reasons, the advisor needs to be aware of the other things going on in the student’s life because they may have a big impact on the student’s success in college. This also ties in with the need for the advisor to be knowledgeable about referral resources both on and off campus. Certain issues related to transfer are also unique to community colleges. For example, in addition to focusing on program requirements at the community college, attention needs to be paid to requirements at the four-year institution so that the maximum amount of credits can be transferred. Related to that is the need to help students identify transfer institutions as quickly as possible so that their program can be designed to take advantage of existing articulation agreements. For many community college students, the possibility of transfer to a four year college may never have been considered; consequently, academic advisors also have a responsibility to identify, early in the process, those qualified students who have yet to view transfer as an option, and to provide them with the support, encouragement and skills needed to explore such opportunities successfully. Because many of these students may not be enrolled in the traditional transfer programs, this is not always an easy process.

Kirk-Kuwaye, M., & Nishida, D. (2001). Effect of low and high advisor involvement on the academic performance of probation students. *The NACADA Journal*, 21(1, 2), 40–45. Retrieved on August 18, 2015, from <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/portals/0/Clearinghouse/Links/documents/21-1-2-Kirk-Kuwaye-Nishida-pp-40-45.pdf>

*Abstract:* While advisors can find support in theory and practice for assisting students who are performing poorly in academics, the optimal involvement level for improving academic performance is undetermined. We conducted three experimental trials to compare low- and high-involvement of advisors assisting probation students. The involvement levels for the low-involvement groups were identical, while involvement varied among those groups receiving the high-involvement treatment. We found a significant difference in academic performance only between the group that experienced the greatest advisor involvement and the simultaneously assessed low-involvement group. The results suggest that full institutional intervention is needed to effectively help probation students.

Makela, J. P. (2006). *Advising community college students: Exploring traditional and emerging theory. In brief*. Champaign, IL: Office of Community College Research and Leadership. Retrieved on August 20, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED495222.pdf>

*Abstract:* Community college advising and counseling practitioners provide a productive setting for establishing a positive tone for self and academic discovery, while assisting students in finding their place within higher education. This brief compares current advising strategies for underprepared students or students with low college readiness. One of the earliest, most referenced, and often controversial advising strategies for underprepared students employed by community college student services advisors and counselors is what Burton Clark in 1960 termed “cooling-out.” This five-step process involves pre-entrance testing, counseling interviews at the beginning of the semester, mandatory orientation to college courses, improvement notices for students doing unsatisfactory work, and finally probation for those who cannot maintain minimum grades. Clark concluded that this is a process in which a student “does not fail, but rectifies a mistake.” The author of this brief locates several parallels between “cooling out” to such modern career advising strategies as Cognitive Information Processing (CIP). CIP fundamentally breaks academic and career decisions down into three categories: gaining knowledge, making decisions, and understanding career thoughts. The author notes that in recent years, many community colleges have tried to both maintain standards of higher education and decrease the stigma associated with remedial education. The word “remedial” has often been replaced with “developmental,” reflecting the community college’s view of these courses—a temporary stage of learning. Studies indicate that reframing remedial classes may cause considerable confusion in students grasping the full implications of their course decisions, and this may suggest that advising strategies with a basis in soft language that hides the true nature of remediation may cause more harm than good to students. Such pitfalls may enable advisors and counselors to reshape their strategies for maximum effectiveness. Particularly important will be clarifying techniques and goals, increasing the transparency of the advising process, and closely tying advising efforts to learning opportunities that continuously serve students throughout their community college experience.

Orozco, G. L., Alvarez, A. N., & Gutkin, T. (2010). Effective advising of diverse students in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 34, 717–737.

*Abstract:* In-depth interviews with 363 students across nine campuses capture the experiences of Latino, African American, Asian, Native American, White and Immigrant students in the California community college system. Four themes emerged with respect to advising and counseling: (a) Differences in the Use of Counseling and Advising; (b) The Importance of the Counseling Relationship; (c) Knowing the System; and (d) Cultural Understanding and Racism.

Preuss, M., & Switalski, R. (2008). *Academic probation intervention through academic assistance advising*. Wentworth, NC: Rockingham Community College. Retrieved on August 20, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502891.pdf>

*Abstract:* Retaining and aiding students on academic probation is a concern for all institutions of higher education. Students placed on academic probation by Rockingham Community College (RCC) have been encouraged to participate in an intervention program since the summer of 2006. When treated as an aggregate, the data regarding the program indicates that it was associated with positive impact on student outcomes. Active participation in the program was associated with significant increases in the likelihood that students on probation would avoid suspension, would improve their GPA, and would remain enrolled in their classes at the college. There were no discernible differences in outcomes for the various age, sex and race groups indicating a lack of bias in the programming. These results indicate that academic assistance advising is a potentially effective intervention with probationary students in college.

Scrivener, S., & Weiss, M. J. (2009). *More guidance, better results? Three-year effects of an enhanced student services program at two community colleges*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved on August 21, 2015, from [http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full\\_450.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_450.pdf)

*Abstract:* Over the past four decades, community colleges have played an increasingly important role in higher education. Today, community colleges—which are accessible and affordable, relative to four-year institutions—enroll more than one in every three postsecondary education students. Unfortunately, among students who enroll in community colleges with the intent to earn a credential or transfer to a four-year institution, only 51 percent achieve their goal within six years. These students may face fewer difficulties and make better academic progress if they had better access to, or more adequate, student services, but, as it stands, student-to-counselor ratios at community colleges are often more than 1,000 to 1, limiting the assistance that students receive. As part of MDRC's multisite Opening Doors demonstration, Lorain County Community College and Owens Community College in Ohio ran a program that provided enhanced student services and a modest stipend to low-income students. Students in the Opening Doors program were assigned to one of a team of counselors, with whom they were expected to meet at least two times per semester for two semesters to discuss academic progress and resolve any issues that might affect their schooling. Each counselor worked with far fewer students than did the regular college counselors, which allowed for more frequent, intensive contact. Participating students were also eligible for a \$150 stipend for two semesters, for a total of \$300. To estimate the effects of the program, MDRC worked with the colleges to randomly assign students either to a program group, whose members were eligible for the Opening Doors services and stipend, or to a control group, whose members received standard college services and no Opening Doors stipend. Any subsequent substantial differences in academic and other outcomes can be attributed to the program.

### **Online support**

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. (2012). *The role of counseling faculty and delivery of counseling services in the California Community Colleges*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved on August 21, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED546760.pdf>

*Abstract:* The original paper, *The role of counseling faculty in the California Community Colleges* (1994), provided principled positions of the Academic Senate regarding the essential functions of counselors and the delivery of counseling services in helping students achieve success. The paper concluded with specific guidance on appropriate roles for paraprofessionals, and an appendix addressed the role of faculty advisors. Much of the content from the original paper remains in this version because, nearly 30 years after the 1986 Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act, it is still compelling and necessary for ensuring quality educational experiences for students and useful for local senates in crafting initiatives to improve student success. Some of the Title 5 regulation language has been removed, as legislation pertaining to matriculation is under revision at this time due to the Board of Governors' 2012 endorsement of the Student Success Task Force Recommendations. Added to the paper is a description of education plans and a section on technology and online counseling, and the sections on paraprofessionals and faculty advisors have been incorporated into the body of the paper rather than included as appendices. Summary recommendations have also been included in this revision. The purposes of this paper are threefold. First, it clarifies the role of the counseling discipline and provides a description of a comprehensive student education plan in the California Community College system. Second, it provides a foundation for discussion of the uses and restrictions of paraprofessionals in the delivery of counseling services. Third, it offers updates on minimum qualifications, the use of faculty advisors, and current trends in technological tools and online counseling, as well as a chronology of funding patterns and legislative activity to date, that provide a more wide-ranging

perspective of how the profession of counseling has evolved—or not—since 1994. Sample education plans are appended.

Herndon, M. C. (2011). Leveraging web technologies in student support self-services. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 154*, 14–29.

*Abstract:* The use of Web technologies to connect with and disperse information to prospective and current students can be effective for students as well as efficient for colleges. Early results of the use of such technologies in a statewide system point to high rates of satisfaction among students when information is delivered, provide clues on how various aspects of social media may be tapped to connect with existing and potential students, and offer a road map for effectively serving more students with fewer resources. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future applications for Web-based technologies in multiplying the efforts of good academic counseling techniques to better serve and retain students.

Kalamkarian, H. S., & Karp, M. M. (2015). *Student attitudes toward technology-mediated advising systems* (CCRC Working Paper No. 82). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. Retrieved on August 21, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/student-attitudes-toward-technology-mediated-advising-systems.pdf>

*Abstract:* The literature on broad-access colleges suggests that low persistence and completion rates may be improved through better advising that employs a teaching-as-advising approach. While resource constraints have traditionally limited the ability of colleges to reform advising practices, technological advances have made it possible to implement technology-based advising tools, some of which can replace face-to-face services. Using focus group interview data from 69 students at six colleges, this study investigates students' attitudes toward technology-mediated advising. More specifically, we seek to understand how students' perceptions and experiences vary across different advising functions. We find that students are open to using technology for more formulaic tasks, such as course registration, but prefer in-person support for more complex tasks, such as planning courses for multiple semesters and refining their academic and career goals.

Karp, M. M., & Fletcher, J. (2015). *Using technology to reform advising: Insights from colleges*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved on August 26, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/ipas-tech-reform-advising-packet.html>

*Abstract:* Increasingly, colleges are using new technologies to address challenges created by high student-to-advisor ratios and by student unfamiliarity in navigating college. Sometimes referred to as Integrated Planning and Advising Services (IPAS), these technologies provide an array of student support-focused functions, including course management, degree planning, and early alerts. Yet colleges and college personnel often approach IPAS as a technology deployment rather than as a mediator of reform. Ideally, IPAS motivates a college to rethink and reform its advising system. This guide summarizes findings from a study in which we examined how six colleges planned for and began IPAS implementation and associated reform, and how they addressed the surprises and challenges they encountered. The guide and the Questions-to-Ask supplement aim to help college practitioners embarking on advising reform anticipate and plan for the kinds of challenges that peer institutions have faced, so they can improve their chances for successful implementation and end-user adoption. We identify three key lessons: (1) implementation is about more than technology; (2) good project management is essential; and (3) an IPAS-ready culture facilitates reform. In describing each lesson, we provide specific examples from the six colleges, and we share strategies they used to move their projects forward.

Klempin, S., & Karp, M. M. (2015). *Leadership for transformative change: Lessons from technology-mediated reform in broad-access colleges*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved on August 26, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/leadership-for-transformative-change.html>

*Abstract:* Community colleges and broad-access four-year institutions have a crucial role to play in increasing educational equity in the United States. In order to fulfill this role, however, institutions must engage in organizational change to address their low completion rates. Drawing on qualitative case studies of six colleges, this study explores the influence of different types of leadership approaches on the implementation of a technology-mediated advising reform, and assesses which types of leadership are associated with transformative organizational change. Expanding on Heifetz's theory of adaptive change and Karp and Fletcher's Readiness for Technology Adoption framework, the authors find that transformative change requires multitiered leadership with a unified commitment to a shared vision for the reform and its goals.

### **Other Supports for Retention**

This section includes reports, handbooks, and articles on other ways to support and retain community college students.

Bailey, T., & Alfonso, M. (2005). *Paths to persistence: An analysis of research on program effectiveness at community colleges*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/paths-persistence-program-effectiveness.pdf>

*Abstract:* During the last decade, educators and policy-makers have increased their focus on the success of students once they enter community college. As a result, accreditation agencies and state regulators are increasingly scrutinizing measures of student outcomes such as persistence and completion rates. At the same time, national initiatives by foundations and the U.S. Department of Education are focused on developing policy and institutional practices that will improve success rates for community college students. This report has been written as part of the Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count initiative, which is based on the premise that research about and at community colleges must play a central role in any strategy to increase student success. This report presents a critical analysis of the state of the research on the effectiveness of four types of practices in increasing persistence and completion at community colleges: 1) advising, counseling, mentoring and orientation programs; 2) learning communities; 3) developmental education and other services for academically underprepared students; and 4) college-wide reform. We use this analysis to draw lessons about effective institutional practices, identify promising areas for future research, evaluate the state of program-effectiveness research at community colleges, and make recommendations for improving related research.

Blash, L. (n.d.). *Targeting student support services*. Berkeley, CA: Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges.

*Excerpt:* First generation students, students on academic probation, students who are undecided about their major, foster youth, returning veterans, students on public assistance and developmental education students may need additional support to navigate the college experience and do their best academically. There are a number of discrete programs, funded through the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), federal funds and private foundations, which help provide these services. The CCCCCO Student Services Division currently supports a number of multi-service categorical programs to students deemed in need of high touch services.

Some of these programs are described [in this document]—all have documented evidence of success for high need students.

Booth, K., Cooper, D., Karandjeff, K., Large, M., Pellegrin, N., Purnell, R., Rodriguez-Kiino, D., Schiorring, E., & Willett, T. (2013). *Using student voices to redefine support: What community college students say institutions, instructors, and others can do to help them succeed*. Sacramento: RP Group. Retrieved on August 26, 2015, from <http://rpgroup.org/sites/default/files/StudentPerspectivesResearchReportJan2013.pdf>

*Excerpt:* As California's community colleges (CCC) respond to the state's Student Success Task Force recommendations, many constituents are considering how student support can be implemented to improve completion. College practitioners, policymakers and advocacy groups are all exploring how to preserve delivery of existing supports, while at the same time, rethink ways to effectively engage more students with the assistance they need to succeed. To inform this dialog at both institutional and system levels, the RP Group asked nearly 900 students from 13 California community colleges what they think supports their educational success, paying special attention to the factors African Americans and Latinos cite as important to their achievement.

California Community Colleges Student Services and Special Programs Division. (2013). *California community colleges student success and support program handbook*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from <http://www.deanza.edu/sssp/pdf/sssp handbook.pdf>

*Excerpt:* The purpose of the California Community Colleges' (CCC) Student Success and Support Program Handbook is two-fold. First, it offers the reader an overview of the history and goals of the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP), formerly known as the Matriculation Program. Second, it provides practical guidance to colleges about core services, program implementation and reporting requirements, including program and budget plans and funding guidelines. The handbook also includes references to important resources, including the relevant sections of the Education Code and title 5 regulations (Appendices A and B).

California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force. (n.d.). *Advancing student success in the California Community Colleges*. Retrieved on August 21, 2015, from <http://www.californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/portals/0/executive/studentssuccessta skforce/sstf final report 1-17-12 print.pdf>

*Excerpt:* This report, the product of the California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, contains recommendations aimed at improving the educational outcomes of our students and the workforce preparedness of our state. The 22 recommendations contained herein are more than just discrete proposals. Taken together, these recommendations would strengthen the community college system by expanding those structures and programs that work and realigning our resources with what matters most: student achievement. This report presents a vision for our community colleges in the next decade, focused on what is needed to grow our economy, meeting the demands of California's evolving workplace, and inspiring and realizing the aspirations of students and families.

Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2012). *A matter of degrees: Promising practices for community college student success (a first look)*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from [http://www.ccsse.org/docs/matter\\_of\\_degrees.pdf](http://www.ccsse.org/docs/matter_of_degrees.pdf)

*Excerpt:* Community colleges across the country have created innovative, data-informed programs that are models for educating underprepared students, engaging traditionally underserved students, and helping students from all backgrounds succeed. However, because most of these programs have limited scope, the field now has pockets of success rather than widespread improvement. Turning these many small accomplishments into broad achievement—and improved

completion rates—depends on bringing effective programs to scale. To meet this challenge while facing shrinking budgets and rising enrollment, colleges must be certain that all of their resources—time and money—are being spent on educational practices that work for all students. But what makes a practice effective? And how can colleges identify the mix of practices they should use to close achievement gaps so all students succeed? To help colleges answer these questions, the Center for Community College Student Engagement has launched a special initiative, Identifying and Promoting High-Impact Educational Practices in Community Colleges. This report presents the initiative’s preliminary findings.

Cooper, M. (n.d.). *Student support services at community colleges: A strategy for increasing student persistence and attainment*. Retrieved on August 21, 2015, from <http://www2.ed.gov/PDFDocs/college-completion/04-student-support-services-at-community-colleges.pdf>

*Excerpt:* One strategy for increasing student persistence and achievement outcomes lies in the area of student support services. These types of services are a standard feature at most higher education institutions. A modest body of research suggests that student support services play a role in promoting successful outcomes for community college students. This paper examines the current research on student services in community college settings, model programs, and suggested approaches for improving these services. While many promising practices are offered, it is important to note, that this paper does not address the type of resources needed for effective implementation.

Cooper, D., Rodriguez-Kiino, D., Scharper, A., Karandjeff, K., Chaplot, P., Schiorring, E., & Taylor, S. (2014). *Practically speaking. Community college practices that help (re)define student support: A practitioner primer*. Berkeley, CA: Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from [http://rpgroup.org/sites/default/files/PractitionerPrimer\\_Spring2014.pdf](http://rpgroup.org/sites/default/files/PractitionerPrimer_Spring2014.pdf)

*Excerpt:* The RP Group has engaged multiple stakeholders—administrators, faculty and instructional deans, counselors and other student services professionals, trustees and students—with the study’s findings and themes over the life of this project. Throughout this process, community college educators repeatedly asked for more concrete examples of how to realize what the students in Student Support (Re)defined said they need to succeed. This resource responds to these practitioner requests, offering specific institutional and statewide efforts, programmatic approaches and individual practices that demonstrate the five key themes emerging from the Student Support (Re)defined research. By definition, a “primer” can help “[get] you ready for what comes next.” In turn, we also designed this resource to promote individual reflection on and inspire community dialog about these examples with the intention of promoting innovation and change. To that end, this resource provides real-world insights about how individuals and programs have launched and sustained—and in some cases expanded and replicated—initiatives designed to strengthen support at their institutions and across the state.

Hanover Research. (2014). *Best practices in retention at community colleges*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on August 14, 2015, from <http://www.mercedregionalgateway.org/resources/Best%20Practices%20in%20Retention%20at%20Community%20Colleges.pdf>

*Abstract:* In the following report, Hanover Research identifies best practices for improving retention at community colleges. The report provides a review of the research literature regarding retention best practices as well as a series of program profiles of exemplary programs.

Karp, M. M. (2011). Toward a new understanding on non-academic student support: Four mechanisms for improving student outcomes in the community college (CCRC Working Paper No. 28, Assessment of Evidence Series). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/non-academic-student-support-mechanisms.html>

*Abstract:* Despite their best efforts, community colleges continue to see low rates of student persistence and degree attainment, particularly among academically vulnerable students. While low persistence and degree attainment can be attributed in large part to students' academic readiness, non-academic issues also play a part. This paper examines programs and practices that work to address the non-academic needs of students. A review of the literature on non-academic support yields evidence of four mechanisms by which such supports can improve student outcomes: (1) creating social relationships, (2) clarifying aspirations and enhancing commitment, (3) developing college know-how, and (4) addressing conflicting demands of work, family and college. Identifying these mechanisms allows for a deeper understanding of promising interventions and the conditions that may lead students to become integrated into college life. Each of these mechanisms can occur within a variety of programs, structures, or even informal interactions. The paper concludes by discussing implications for community colleges.

Moore, C., Shulock, N., Ceja, M., & Lang, D. M. (2007). *Beyond the open door: Increasing student success in the California community colleges*. Sacramento, CA: Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy. Retrieved on August 26, 2015, from [http://csus.edu/edinsights/PDFs/R\\_Beyond\\_Open\\_Door\\_08-07.pdf](http://csus.edu/edinsights/PDFs/R_Beyond_Open_Door_08-07.pdf)

*Excerpt:* In a policy brief released in February 2007, titled Rules of the Game, we presented data indicating that rates of completing certificates, degrees and transfers to universities in the California Community Colleges (CCC) are low. More importantly, we concluded that low completion is in part due to state policies which have produced barriers to the CCC's ability to better foster student success and completion. This report presents more in-depth results of those analyses and offers recommendations for policy reforms aimed at improving student success.

Nodine, T., Venezia, A., & Bracco, K. (2011). *Changing course: A guide to increasing student completion in community colleges*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from [http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/changing\\_course\\_V1\\_fb\\_10032011.pdf](http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/changing_course_V1_fb_10032011.pdf)

*Excerpt:* The goal of this guide is to assist community college faculty, staff, and administrators as they begin rethinking and redesigning their systems, programs, and instruction to increase student completion. The guide identifies the goals of the Completion by Design initiative; summarizes key design principles for improving completion rates; and, in the process, offers a common language for initiating this work. It is understood that the community colleges participating in the initiative bring a wide range of expertise and skills to this process and that their work will refine and advance what we know about improving student completion rates in community colleges. A companion document, Changing Course: A Planning Tool for Increasing Student Completion in Community Colleges, offers additional information and strategies, including a series of self-reflective questions to assist colleges in planning their own approaches to improving college completion. The companion document will be further developed during the planning year, based on participating colleges' experiences.

Pineda, C. (2008). *Project Success outcomes*. Torrance, CA: Office of Institutional Research, El Camino College. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from [https://www.elcamino.edu/beta/administration/ir/docs/programs/Project%20Success\\_summary.pdf](https://www.elcamino.edu/beta/administration/ir/docs/programs/Project%20Success_summary.pdf)

*Excerpt:* Project Success is a program designed to increase the retention rate and to improve the academic performance of its students. These goals are achieved by providing support services such as ongoing counseling, tutoring, early registration workshops, faculty, staff and peer mentoring, field trips to four-year universities, and learning communities. This program is open to all students but serves primarily African-American students who are full time and right out of high school. The purpose of this study is to track Project Success participants from their initial participation term to compare successful progress through basic skills, enrollment persistence rates, and goal achievement over time. Students were tracked by cohort to determine numbers and rates of persistence from Fall 2001 through Fall 2004 cohorts.

Purnell, R., & Blank, S. (2004). *Support success: Services that may help low-income students succeed in community college*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED484621.pdf>

*Abstract:* This paper examines how U.S. community colleges can and do organize the diverse set of guidance, counseling, and other supports—collectively known as student services—that surround their academic programming. To many Americans, community colleges are the most accessible way to earn the postsecondary degrees that can be stepping stones to economic and personal success. In addition to typically charging lower tuitions and using less stringent admissions policies than four-year colleges and universities, community colleges are often better geared to the needs of students who have low incomes and to so-called nontraditional students, such as young single parents, financially independent adults, welfare recipients, students of color and of immigrant backgrounds, first-generation college students, and older and disabled students. However, many of these students never graduate from community colleges. To address the problem of high attrition rates in these institutions, MDRC has launched a demonstration called “Opening Doors,” which provides for one of the nation’s first large-scale experimental evaluations of innovative strategies to help community college students complete their degree programs. Besides curricular and instructional reforms and supplemental financial aid, the third broad strategy being tested in the demonstration is the enhancement of student services. Drawing on a literature review, reconnaissance work to develop Opening Doors, and information on early operations of the community college sites in the demonstration, this paper provides an overview of the current state of student services and promising practices for service delivery. It examines five interrelated but distinct elements of a student services program: academic guidance and counseling; academic supports (direct instruction and tutoring on academic subjects and skills); personal guidance and counseling; career counseling; and supplemental supports like child care, transportation help, supply vouchers. In addition, it considers two strategies for providing student services that cut across these categories: (1) programs targeted to low-income and nontraditional students that offer combinations of different kinds of counseling and supports and (2) multiservice centers. For each element of student services, the paper highlights innovative practices found at community colleges around the country. A concluding section offers observations on needs and opportunities associated with the provision of student services in community college settings. The following are appended: (1) The Opening Doors Sites; and (2) Participants in the 2002 Seminar on Student Services.

Scott-Clayton, J. (2011). *The shapeless river: Does a lack of structure inhibit students' progress at community colleges?* (CCRC Working Paper No. 25). New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center. Retrieved on August 26, 2015, from <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/lack-of-structure-students-progress.html>

*Abstract:* For many students at community colleges, finding a path to degree completion is the equivalent of navigating a shapeless river on a dark night—but very few studies have explicitly examined the role of structure in student persistence. This paper addresses the issue of student persistence by integrating previously disconnected evidence and drawing on ideas from behavioral economics and psychology. Central to the paper is the structure hypothesis: that community college students will be more likely to persist and succeed in programs that are tightly and consciously structured, with relatively little room for individuals to unintentionally deviate from paths toward completion, and with limited bureaucratic obstacles for students to circumnavigate. Evidence suggests that the lack of structure in many community colleges is likely to result in less-than-optimal decisions by students about whether and how to persist toward a credential. Though there is no silver-bullet intervention to address this problem, this paper highlights several promising approaches and suggests directions for future experimentation and research.

Schiorring, E., & Purnell, R. (2012). *Literature review brief: Establishing the context for an examination of student support*. Berkeley, CA: Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges.

*Excerpt:* Student Support (Re)defined aims to understand how—in an environment of extreme scarcity—student support can be delivered both inside and outside the classroom to improve student success for all students, and in particular African-American and Latino learners. In summer 2011, the RP Group engaged in an initial literature review and preliminary discussions with key community college practitioners and researchers to (1) place this study in the context of existing research and current initiatives to change the provision of student supports and (2) inform development of our own project's activities. This literature review examined existing research on the essential components of supports that lead to increases in students' persistence and completion.

Scrivener, S., & Coghlan, E. (2011). *Opening doors to student success: A synthesis of findings from an evaluation at six community colleges* (Policy Brief). New York: MDRC. Retrieved on August 19, 2015, from [http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/policybrief\\_27.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/policybrief_27.pdf)

*Abstract:* In today's economy, having a postsecondary credential means better jobs and wages. Community colleges, with their open access policies and low tuition, are an important pathway into postsecondary education for nearly half of all U.S. undergraduates. Yet only one-third of all students who enter these institutions with the intent to earn a degree or certificate actually meet this goal within six years. The reasons for this are many, including that community college students are typically underprepared for college-level work, face competing priorities outside of school, and lack adequate financial resources. Recent cuts to higher education spending along with insufficient financial aid and advising at colleges only add to the problem. Ultimately, these factors contribute to unacceptably low persistence and completion rates. In response to these issues, MDRC launched the Opening Doors Demonstration in 2003—the first large-scale random assignment study in a community college setting. The demonstration pursued promising strategies that emerged from focus groups with low-income students, discussions with college administrators, and an extensive literature review. Partnering with six community colleges across the country, MDRC helped develop and evaluated four distinct programs based on the following approaches: financial incentives, reforms in instructional practices, and enhancements in student services. Colleges were encouraged to focus on one strategy but to think creatively about combining elements of the other strategies to design programs that would help students perform better academically and persist toward degree completion. Opening Doors provides some of the first rigorous evidence that a range of

interventions can, indeed, improve educational outcomes for community college students. The findings spurred some of the colleges to scale up their programs and led to additional large-scale demonstrations to test some of the most promising strategies. More work must be done, however, both to determine whether the early effects can last and to test even bolder reforms. This 12-page policy brief describes the different strategies tested, discusses what MDRC has learned from Opening Doors, and offers some suggestions to policymakers and practitioners for moving forward.

Tovar, E., & Simon, M. A. (2006). Academic probation as a dangerous opportunity: Factors influencing diverse college students' success. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice*, 30(7), 547–564.

*Abstract:* The number of minority, particularly Latino, students attending community colleges is on the rise in the United States. Such students frequently lack academic preparation and financial resources. These difficulties, when added to family obligations, often require that minority students attend institutions that offer the most flexible arrangements—typically, community colleges. Due to these issues, however, their successful transition to community college may be difficult. The authors found that up to 35% of first-time freshmen—with a disproportionate number of Latinos—are on probation after their first semester at a large, urban, public community college. The authors developed and instituted a probationary student re-orientation program to both assist these students and understand how their background characteristics and perceptions of the college environment impacted their academic standing. Using Schlossberg's transition theory as our theoretical framework, this study assessed how students of different ethnicities differed along reported levels of academic motivation, general coping, and receptivity to support services. Results suggest that Latinos are more likely to experience academic difficulties, are more prone to drop out, and, yet, are more willing to receive institutional assistance as compared to other students. Framing students' probationary status as a "dangerous opportunity" to instill behavioral/attitudinal changes, the authors discuss how counseling faculty and advisors may assist probationary students in achieving success.

Venezia, A., Bracco, K., & Nodine, T. (2011). *Changing course: A planning tool for increasing student completion in community colleges*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd. Retrieved on August 24, 2015, from <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2014.ptw.%2814%29.pdf>

*Excerpt:* The main purpose of this planning tool is to help community colleges facilitate productive conversations and develop systemwide plans to raise student completion rates substantially. The planning tool is initially targeted at colleges participating in the Completion by Design initiative. Based on these colleges' experiences and feedback, the planning tool will be revised and augmented as a living document, to capture and disseminate information about improving student completion rates. This planning tool draws from the ideas described in *Changing Course: A Guide to Increasing Student Completion in Community Colleges* and is designed to serve as a complement to that document. Whereas the guide introduces the key goals and principles of the Completion by Design initiative, this planning tool offers a series of self-reflective questions to assist community colleges in examining their own areas of strength and their emphasis on increasing student success on their campuses. As colleges use these questions and other inquiry-based processes to rethink and redesign their services and programs, this planning tool also provides them with information about the range of practices that community colleges have used to improve student completion rates.

Weissman, E., Cerna, O., Geckeler, C., Schneider, E., Price, D. V., & Smith, T. J. (2009). *Promoting partnerships for student success: Lessons from the SSPIRE Initiative*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved on August 25, 2015, from <http://www.mdrc.org/publication/promoting-partnerships-student-success>

*Abstract:* California's 110 community colleges are an essential part of the state's higher education and workforce development structure, serving over 2.6 million students annually. But a growing

number of students face major obstacles to success, including inadequate preparation for college-level courses, and many end up dropping out. New scholarship suggests that student support services, such as academic and personal advising, counseling, tutoring, and financial aid, are critically important for promoting better academic outcomes for students. The challenge is to integrate these support services with academic instruction. Unfortunately, the very way most community colleges are organized—with student services housed in one division and academic functions in another, each functioning in parallel but with little coordination—creates obstacles to successful integration. These obstacles are often exacerbated by competition between the divisions for limited budget resources. To help overcome this divide, the Student Support Partnership Integrating Resources and Education (SSPIRE) initiative was funded by the James Irvine Foundation and coordinated by MDRC. SSPIRE aimed to increase the success of young, low-income, and academically underprepared California community college students by helping community colleges strengthen their support services and better integrate these services with academic instruction. Nine California community colleges were selected to participate in SSPIRE, and each received as much as \$250,000 in total from 2006 through early 2009. There was no uniform SSPIRE program; rather, each college proposed its own approach to integrate student services and instruction, based on campus needs and objectives. The grant funds enabled each college to support strategies that served approximately 100 to 1,000 students per year and to simultaneously identify and expand promising practices and look for ways to sustain their programs with existing college revenues. This report describes how the SSPIRE colleges implemented four basic approaches to integrating student services with instruction: learning communities, a “drop-in” study center, a summer math program, and case management programs. Each college supplemented the SSPIRE funding with its own contributions, and all the colleges reached disadvantaged students on their campuses, an important goal of the initiative. The report also presents some of the colleges’ own data, which suggest that SSPIRE services may have led to modest improvements in students’ course pass rates and persistence in college. Finally, this report offers cross-cutting lessons drawn from MDRC’s research on the initiative. These lessons present practitioners and policymakers across the state and nation with examples from well-implemented programs that integrated student services with academic instruction. Though the changes the SSPIRE colleges made were mostly incremental, the initiative resulted in new programs and practices on each of the campuses. Other institutions of higher education seeking to integrate student services with academic instruction may look to these examples to see that this integration is possible, if not always easy, to achieve. Most important, this report offers hope that more students at these California colleges and elsewhere will receive the information, guidance, and support they need to persist in college and reach their academic goals.

## METHODS

### Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Search

“Community colleges” OR “community college students” AND “orientation programs” OR “student success courses” OR “student education plans” OR “advising programs” OR “retention”

### Search of Databases and Websites

EBSCO Host, Google, and Google Scholar; Center for Community College Student Engagement, Community College Research Center

### Criteria for Inclusion

When REL West staff review resources, they consider—among other things—four factors:

- **Date of the Publication:** The most current information is included, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- **Source and Funder of the Report/Study/Brief/Article:** Priority is given to IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols.
- **Methodology:** Sources include randomized controlled trial studies, surveys, self-assessments, literature reviews, and policy briefs. Priority for inclusion generally is given to randomized controlled trial study findings, but the reader should note at least the following factors when basing decisions on these resources: numbers of participants (Just a few? Thousands?); selection (Did the participants volunteer for the study or were they chosen?); representation (Were findings generalized from a homogeneous or a diverse pool of participants? Was the study sample representative of the population as a whole?).
- **Existing Knowledge Base:** Although we strive to include vetted resources, there are times when the research base is limited or nonexistent. In these cases, we have included the best resources we could find, which may include newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, organization websites, and other sources.

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by educators and policymakers in the Western region (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) at WestEd. This memorandum was prepared by REL West under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-12-C-0002, administered by WestEd. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.