

ELGIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Annual Student Success Report

**Prepared October 2012
by the office of the Vice President of Teaching,
Learning & Student Development**

*Our Mission
To Improve People's Lives Through Learning*

The Elgin Community College Student Success Report provides an overview of the student success milestone achievement for new student cohorts. This data should be useful in developing student success initiatives and goals.

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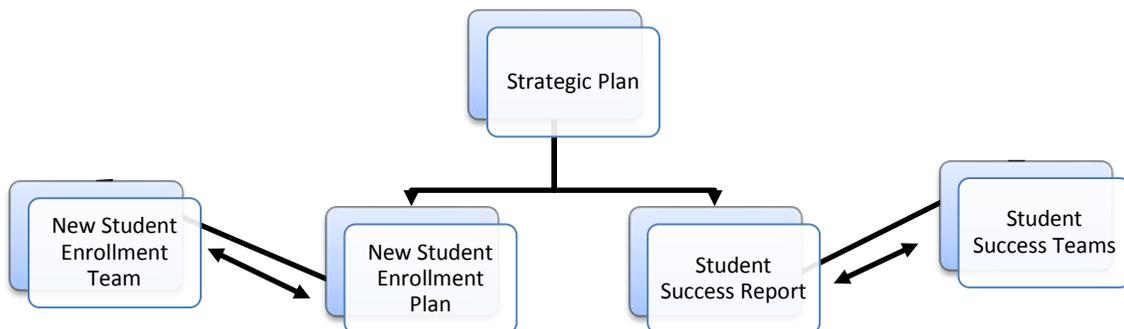
Community colleges were established with a focus on expanding access to a college education. With the focus on providing opportunity, most colleges were largely guided by the philosophy that students have the “right to fail.” This meant many programs and services were offered to students with very few requirements or expectations for success. National and state funding formulas reinforced the importance of *access*, over *success*, as they funded institutions largely based on enrollments.

Within the last ten years, however, the national emphasis for higher education has dramatically shifted. The emphasis is now more centrally focused on student learning and completion of educational goals¹. Increased calls for accountability have demanded colleges become more informed about and responsible for improving student success. The “completion agenda” is challenging colleges to carefully consider the quality of the learning experience in- and out-of-the-classroom.

The purpose of this report is to provide evidence regarding the current state of student success at Elgin Community College. However, evidence alone is insufficient for making improvements. Cross-functional teams and departments must use this information to take action to make targeted improvements which will help more ECC students meet their educational goals.

There are two central aspects of the student experience the Teaching, Learning & Student Development division plans for and monitors. The first is to ensure student access and appropriate support through the transition period. The annual New Student Enrollment Plan defines pertinent data and actions for these efforts. Second, this initial Student Success Report provides a clearer understanding of what happens to students after they enroll. Both plans/reports support the college’s Strategic Plan and are focused on helping us better understand the student experience. The following graphic illustrates the connections between the Strategic Plan, these annual reports, and key teams who inform their development.

Figure 1: Strategic & Annual Planning Connection



¹ Completion is about a family of credentials, including apprenticeships, certificates and degrees.

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Executive Summary

This report is a snapshot of recent data related to student success, especially through the lens of progress and completion. Its intent is to pool information, suggest trends and opportunities, and spur further discussion across campus. It arises from the success of the Achieving the Dream initiative and correlates with the establishment of the new Student Success Infrastructure.

Historically, community colleges have placed more emphasis on access than success; we were founded to break down barriers on one path to the American Dream. The burden of follow-through, like the credit for success, was attributed to individual students.

Trends in higher education (the rise of for-profits, skyrocketing tuitions in spite of growing need, increasingly complex areas of study, the national completion agenda, the movement to tie funding to performance) now drive us to reconsider our role. Community members, partner businesses, funders, legislators, and students expect more clear paths toward in-demand careers, more expertise with navigating the system, more problem-solving support services, and more certificate- and degree-holders each year.

What can existing data tell us about key student experiences? Where do we have the richest opportunities to strengthen student success and completion?

The good news at ECC is plentiful, and it sets the stage for innovative approaches to these topics. Enrollment trends and scholarship/financial aid awards suggest we successfully follow through on our commitment to accessibility. Additionally, ECC has developed a national reputation for leadership on college readiness issues. By placing student success at the heart of our strategic plan and developing an evidence-based culture, we have created a rich environment poised to determine how to build on our successes. Yet before we can determine a course of action, we must first understand the current state by analyzing student momentum and milestones.

The milestones used in this report are consistent with established national models:

- successful completion (A to C grade) of 20 hours;
- successful completion of 40 hours;
- retention to third year;
- transfer within three years; and
- completion of degree or certificate within three years.

This report considered cohorts of new students starting in fall of 2006, 2007, and 2008. Approximately 30 percent of students successfully completed 20 hours within the three year period; approximately 20 percent successfully completed 40 hours; and approximately 17 percent completed their degree or certificate. (Others transferred before completing their degree or certificate.)

Meeting established milestones were strong indicators of student momentum toward goals and may provide key moments on which to focus success strategies. They also suggest strategic timing for encouragement and congratulations, vital college-to-student communications. They could even become part of our shared vocabulary with students and their families, outlining the scaffolding toward completion.

Our data provides that:

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- A number of characteristics determined prior to students entering ECC correlate with increased student success, including college-readiness level, high school grade point average, prior college experience, and race.
- Students who enroll full-time are more likely to complete/transfer within three years than those taking fewer than 12 credit hours per semester.
- Students who initially enroll in career-technical programs are more likely to complete within three years than those who initially enroll in university-transfer programs.
- Successful completion (with grades between A and C) of 20 credit hours within the first year is the single greatest indicator of likelihood of ultimate success; students who meet this milestone are approximately five times more likely to complete/transfer within three years than those who fell short of the 20-credit-hour threshold.
- The higher a student's first-semester grades, the more likely she or he is to complete/transfer.
- Students who return to ECC in the spring semester following their first fall semester are more than 500 times more likely to reach the 20-credit-hour threshold during their first year.
- Successful completion (defined above) of 40 credit hours within the first two years is the next significant indicator of ultimate success; students who meet this milestone are more than five times more likely to complete/transfer within three years than those who fell short of the 40-credit-hour threshold.
- Students who continue through two consecutive fall semesters are more than 90 times more likely to reach the 40-credit-hour milestone than those who take more time off between school years.

Sketching out key milestones and tracking the loss of students at each, it becomes clear that for ECC students, the path to success is like a staircase, with more momentum required to overcome each new step; it is not a simple, linear path. For ECC students, each semester brings a risk of starting over or, at least, a danger of losing the momentum (inside and outside the classroom) that can carry them to their goals.

Compare the following two figures:

Figure 2: Staircase to Success

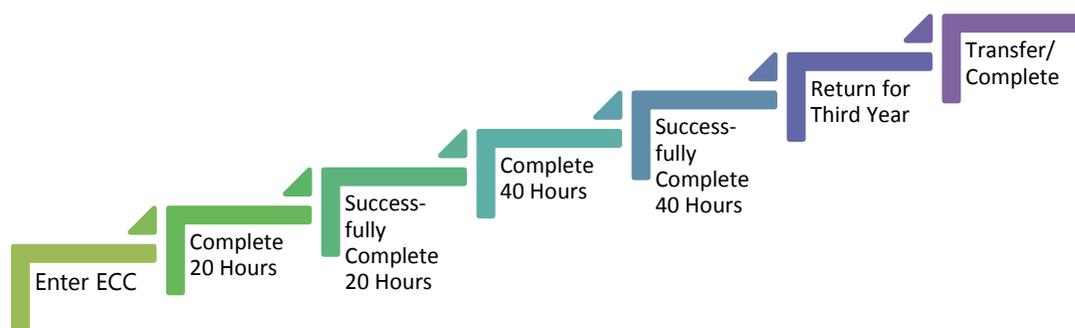
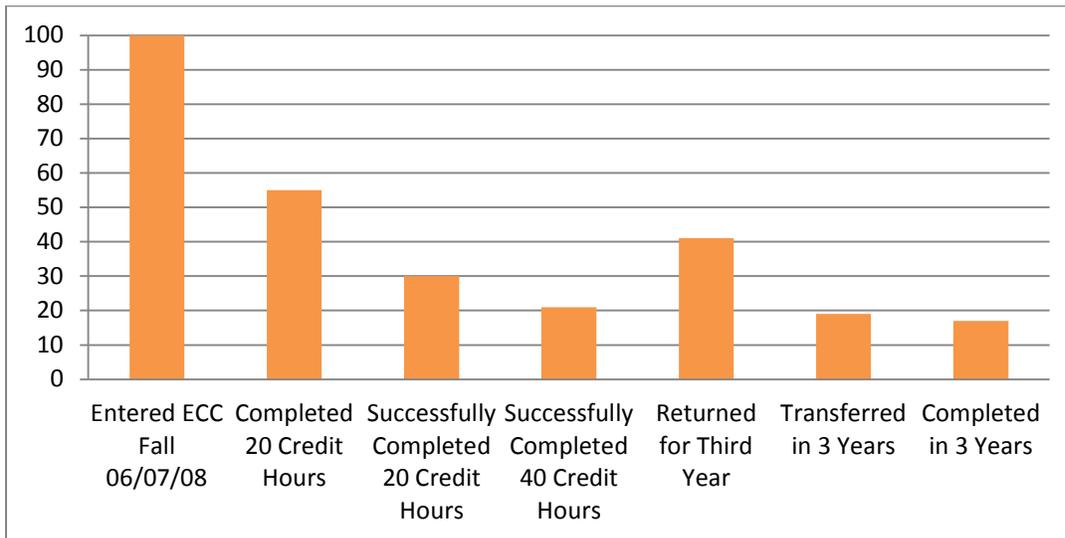
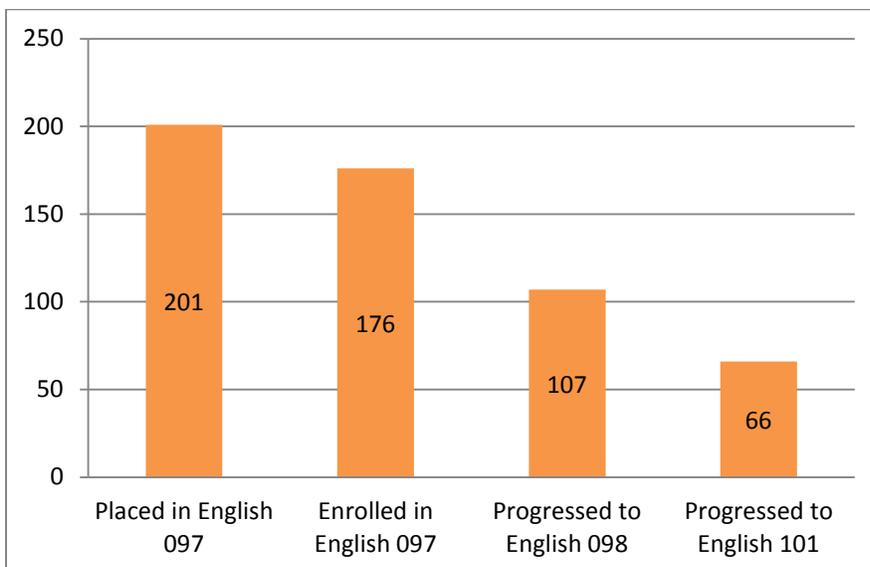


Figure 3: Percent of Students Who...



Data shows that developmental coursework, when needed, adds yet more steps to this climb and places the ability to reach an ultimate goal in even greater jeopardy. Using the developmental math sequence as an example (based on students who completed placement testing in fall 2008): While 59 percent of students who place in upper-level developmental courses proceeded to college-level coursework, only 29 percent of those starting in mid-level developmental courses did so, and just 9 percent of those starting in the lower level joined them. As another example, the following chart tracks the loss of students who completed placement testing in fall 2008 as they progressed through the developmental writing series.

Figure 4: Student Progress through Developmental Writing



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The general conclusions of this report are, perhaps, not far from what we already intuit about the path our students take toward their success. What it reveals is the multitude of specific milestones that ECC can focus on, creating countless experiments and opportunities to measure the results, until we have met our strategic goal of increasing student success and transforming our community.

You are urged to continue reading the full report. Let the data inspire your own questions.

Background

As budgets have tightened, enrollments have continued to swell: In fall 2007, ECC served 9,613 students compared to 11,544 in fall 2012 (+20%). Among the students enrolled, ECC serves low-income students, students of color, adults with no high school diploma and adults with college degrees, traditional-age students directly from high school, and students who are the first in their families to attend college. Addressing the diverse educational needs of these students requires a wide variety of programs and services including adult basic education; developmental education; associate degrees, certificates, and courses; preparation for transfer and employment; and support services. Yet, enrolling and providing services/resources to students is simply not enough to ensure their success.

From the White House to major foundations (Lumina and Gates to name a few) to state governments and accreditation agencies, the call is to increase the number of students completing college programs. These shifts coincide with more and more jobs requiring some form of post-secondary credential for employment. Earnings data highlights a 20-30% earning difference between people who hold associate's degrees compared to those who only hold high school diplomas.² The call to increase college completion rates is not only in response to growing economic demands but it is also a political and social movement that addresses the need to raise more people into the middle class. The imperative now is to maintain the historical level of access while ensuring many more students complete certificates or degrees.

There have been a number of major shifts that reinforce the importance of improving student success. The first is Illinois' implementation of a performance-based funding system which will begin in FY2013. There are six major measures that will be used to evaluate institutions. For the first time, these measures focus on student outcomes rather than enrollments. The data will be used not only within colleges to establish improvement goals, but it will also be shared publicly to validate the importance of funding higher education.

The second is the state of Illinois has joined the Alliance of States as part of the Complete College America initiative. The state has committed to significantly increase the number of students' successfully completing college and achieving degrees and credentials with value in the labor market and close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations³. This is being implemented through state completion goals, the development of action plans at the state and campus-level, and the collection and reporting of common measures of progress.

Third, shifting state policies related to developmental education are threatening college's abilities to serve the neediest students. To date, 22 states have prohibited or limited developmental education courses, or reduced state funding for them at public four-year colleges. While it is clear developmental education can be improved, these policies will have a disproportionate impact on minority students. Moreover, the Pell grant has recently been revised to limit the number of semesters students may receive over a lifetime to the equivalent of 12-full time semesters.

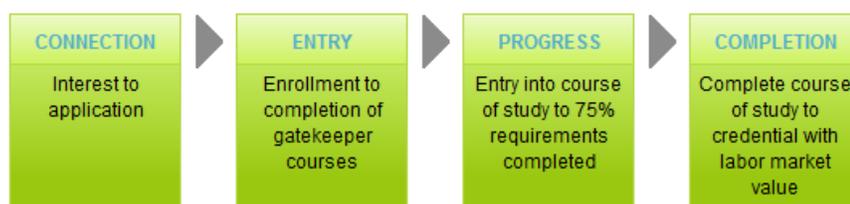
² Achieving the Dream At-a-Glance report (2011)

³ For more information http://www.completecollege.org/alliance_of_states/

The fourth shift involves accreditation changes by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). HLC is more focused than ever on requiring colleges to use disaggregated student success data to determine where to intervene as students' progress toward completion. Specifically, the HLC criteria specifies, "The institution's goals for student persistence and completion of academic programs are clearly stated and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings. The focus this coming year will be to demonstrate Quality Improvement Practices illustrating the process the college is using to improve student success."

In short, there are many external factors converging to focus on the improvement of student success measures as the immediate primary focus of higher education. As a result, the ECC has committed to increasing the number of students who complete their educational goals through its FY2013-2017 Strategic Plan. Achieving these goals requires systemic and structural changes that will only come about through cross-functional collaboration as we rethink major programs and services and, where appropriate, redesign them to increase student completion. It will also require focusing on the full continuum of the student experience, from the first point of contact to completion. The following figure illustrates the various transition points:

Figure 5: Completion by Design's Loss and Momentum Framework



Source: *Completion by Design* at <http://completionbydesign.org/>

This means improvement efforts cannot focus on isolated best practices at any single stage of student progress, but instead should be examined under a holistic approach where integration is sought across all phases and directed toward completion.

ECC Student Progression Trends

In 2009, Elgin Community College joined Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count (AtD), a national initiative dedicated to the idea that community colleges should be as successful at retaining and graduating students, particularly students of color and low-income students, as they are at enrolling them. Participation in this initiative is helping ECC develop a culture of evidence where data about student success—and failure—is gathered, analyzed, and used to identify problems and create ways to address them.

AtD defines success as the rates at which students⁴:

- a. Successfully complete of developmental instruction and advance to credit-bearing courses
- b. Enroll and successfully complete initial college-level or gateway courses in math and English
- c. Successfully complete 20 and 40-credit hour milestones
- d. Attain an ECC certificate or degree within three years

New Student Cohort Definitions

Student success measures are most informative when examined longitudinally. This type of tracking examines students as a cohort, or group of students who all start in the same term, and examines their progression and outcomes over time. The student cohorts include **new students** in fall 2006, fall 2007 and fall 2008 that are **pursuing degree or certificate programs**⁵ as we needed to allow three years for the students to move through their programs to measure outcomes. The “new student” cohort includes both those who are attending college for the first time after high school and those who have transferred from another college or university without earning a degree. Students who were dually enrolled in high school and at ECC in the same term are excluded.

Milestone Progression Analysis

The analysis presented in this report follow similar models proposed by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy (2009) and replicated by Broward Community College (2011). Key milestone/outcome indicators identify important points along students’ educational pathways where their completion significantly increases the likelihood of success. Each intermediate milestone serves as a building block toward the eventual goal of completing a credential or transferring. This first analysis was a simple examination of the rates at which each of six milestones that previous student success literature has suggested to be significant were attained for each new student cohort described above.

Figure 6: Student Success Milestones



⁴ These measures are widely accepted and used across higher education.

⁵ This definition excludes students who begin in Adult Education programs. Future analyses will establish appropriate measures for monitoring the progression of these students.

Definitions for each of the milestones in Table 1 are defined below⁶. The percentage in the table represents the total number of students in the given cohort.

- A. “Complete 20/+ hrs end Yr 1” includes students who completed 20-credit hours or more by the end of their first year as an ECC student with any grade.
- B. “Success Complete 20/+ hrs end Yr1” includes students who successfully completed (grades A-C) 20-credit hours or more by the end of their first year as an ECC student.
- C. “Success Complete 40/+ hrs end Yr 2” includes students who successfully completed 40-credit hours or more by the end of their second year as an ECC student.
- D. “Retained to Year 3” includes students who enrolled at ECC in any terms in the third year.
- E. “Transfer in 3 Yrs” includes students who transferred to a four-year college or university within three years of their first term. Transfer data is collected from the National Student Clearinghouse dataset of higher education students in the United States to two- or four-year institutions.
- F. “Complete in 3 Yrs” includes students who completed a degree or certificate program within three years from their first term of enrollment.

The current status of student progress through these levels is outlined below:

Table 1: ECC New Student Cohort Outcomes

Cohort	Total	Complete 20 hrs	Success 20 hrs	Success 40 hrs	Retained Yr3	Trans in 3 Yrs	Compl in 3 Yrs
Fall 2006	2079	53%	27%	19%	39%	18%	19%
Fall 2007	1979	57%	33%	22%	43%	20%	18%
Fall 2008	2070	55%	30%	21%	39%	20%	15%

Source: Student Success dataset, Fall 2012

Cohorts include students attending ECC for the first-time who are degree/certificate seeking.

Across the three cohorts, about half of new degree/certificate seeking students completes 20-credit hours within three years; however, only one-third do so successfully. Two in ten successfully complete 40-credit hours within three years. Therefore, large percentages remain enrolled at the end of the third year. As a result, only 15-20% ends up either transferring or completing an ECC credential within the standard time frame of three years.

As mentioned previously, understanding the various milestones leading up to completion or transfer is critical for developing appropriate interventions designed to address the most concerning loss points. Further research or investigation may focus on the following considerations:

- Do college faculty and staff understand the importance of students achieving these milestones?
- What expectations do we have for students to meet these milestones?

⁶ Commonly used indicators for fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention were not included as neither indicator relates to successful completion.

- How are expectations shared with students?
- How can we inform students about the importance of achieving these milestones to their success?
- What support structures are in place to help students be more aware of their progress or lack thereof in achieving these milestones?
- Why do so few students successfully complete 20- and 40-credit hours? What can be done to address this? See potential ideas noted in Appendix B: High Impact Student Success Strategies.
- Why are so few students transferring and completing? What can be done to increase these?

Knowing how well students progress; however, is only one lens that can be used to better understand the current state of student success. The following section outlines a different analysis as we consider the milestones are not linear nor are they completed by students in a lock-step fashion. Progression can look quite different for one student compared to another.

Completion Impact Analysis

While the previous section highlighted the number of students within each cohort who *achieved* certain success milestones, in this section, the analysis is focused on determining the historical *importance* that achievement of each milestone has had on students' ability to complete a degree/certificate. The logistic regression analysis used examined the relationships between student completion, milestones/outcomes, and other demographic characteristics. This method was selected to clearly articulate the impact of each measure or characteristic, after first taking into account any influence that other measures or characteristics already had on a given outcome. The end result is a predictive model that indicates the independent influence of each student characteristic/ achievement on the likelihood of completion or transfer to a four-year institution *within 3 years of their first term at ECC*. For more information on the logistic regression analyses conducted, see Appendix C. The value of this analysis is it can help us identify more clearly where loss points occur and it also focuses our research for further analysis.

Completer Profile

For the purposes of the logistic regression analysis, the student measures and characteristics were entered into statistical model in three separate steps, each coinciding with an important theoretical time period within any student's college career. The first step included student and demographic characteristics that were present at the students' entry at ECC. These characteristics included: placement test results, high school GPA, first-term enrollment status, whether a first-time or transfer student, initial major, race/ethnicity, age gender and ACT score. New students from the fall 2006, fall 2007, and fall 2008 cohorts were examined. From this analysis, it is clear certain entry characteristics significantly impact students' success. The following characteristics were found to have the greatest impact on student's likelihood to complete a degree or certificate within three years:

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- Students who were **college ready in reading, writing and math upon entry were almost three times more likely to complete/transfer within three years than students who were not college-ready in any area.**
- High school grade point average (GPA) impacted the likelihood of success. **The higher the high school grade point average students arrive with, the greater the likelihood of success.** Students with the lowest high school GPA's were least likely to complete/transfer.
- Students enrolled **full-time** (12 credit hours or more their first term) **were more likely than their part-time counterparts** to complete/transfer within three years.
- Students who were **attending college for the first time** (FTIC – first-time-in-college) **were less likely than students who transferred in** from another college to complete/transfer.
- Students whose initial major was **university transfer were less likely than their career-technical education major counterparts** to complete/transfer within three years.
- **Black and Latino students were less likely to complete or transfer within three years than their White counterparts.** Significant results were not found for any other racial/ethnic group.

Additional characteristics that were not found to have a significant impact on completion/transfer include gender, ACT score, and age. First generation status data was not available for the fall 2006 and fall 2007 cohorts but has been collected for successive groups.

These results are valuable in that they assist the college in identifying those students who upon entry are least/most likely to succeed which may prove useful in allocating resources and/or directing activities. Many colleges utilize predictive data in this manner to provide support to students who most need it upon entry. Many of these findings support research conducted as part of our involvement with Achieving the Dream.

First-Year Milestones

The first year is a time of transition and exploration during which many new students get lost. In this section, we sought to discover more about what happens during student's first year that impacts the completion of academic credentials. Research has long indicated that new students who are successfully integrated into college are much more likely to succeed. Therefore, the second step of this analysis included milestones and achievements that were believed to indicate a student's level and quality of persistence during their first year at ECC: retention to the following spring term, successful completion of at least 20-credit hours during this first year, first term GPA, and successful completion of the highest level of developmental coursework in writing (English), Reading or Math.

The results indicated that, after accounting for any influence of the characteristics that were discussed in the first step, **successful completion (grades A-C) of 20-credit hours⁷** is the single greatest milestone

⁷ U.S. Department of Education research (Adelman, 2006 in *The Toolbox Revisited*) found students who completed less than 20 successful credits by the end of the first calendar year is a serious negative impact on degree completion.

that students can achieve during their first year at ECC. More specifically, the analysis showed students who met this milestone were approximately **five times more likely to complete/transfer within three years than students who fell short of the 20-credit hour threshold**. In turn, the analysis also showed students were more likely to be successful for every one point increase in their first semester ECC grade point average. Surprisingly, none of the other first-year achievements/milestones listed above had a significant impact on the likelihood of completing or transferring within three years.

The profound impact of the 20-successful credit-hour milestone on student completion/transfer led to a follow-up analysis of any student characteristics and first-year milestones that were initially found to be non-significant. The reason for conducting a follow-up analysis of this type was to examine any independent influence that these indicators may have had on **achievement of that 20-credit hour milestone**. For this follow-up analysis, student characteristics were again entered in an initial step, followed by the same first-year milestones. However, the outcome that was used in this instance was the successful completion of 20-credit hours during the first year, rather than successful completion or transfer. The results indicate:

- The types of students who are **most likely** to successfully complete 20-credit hours include:
 - Students who were **college-ready upon entry to ECC in three subjects** (reading, writing and math) were **more than twice as likely** as their counterparts with developmental education needs.
 - Students who had **higher high school grade point averages** upon entry to ECC were **twice as likely** for every one-point increase in GPA.
- The type of students who are **least likely** to achieve the 20-hour milestone include:
 - Students who **enroll part-time** are **almost twice less likely to achieve the milestone** in comparison to their full-time counterparts.
 - Students who are **transfer majors** are **half as likely not to achieve the milestone** as their CTE counterparts.
 - **Black students** are a **third less likely to achieve the milestone** in comparison to students of other racial/ethnic groups.
 - **Male students** are a **third less likely to achieve the milestone** in comparison to female students.
 - **Students enrolled in college for the first time (FTIC)** are a **quarter less likely to achieve the milestone** in comparison to new students who begin at ECC after having attended another college/university.
- First-term grade point average (GPA) at ECC also impacted the likelihood of successfully completing 20-hours in the first year. Students were **four times more likely to achieve this milestone for every one point increase in their grade point average**.

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- Students who **successfully complete the highest level of developmental writing and math (or placement into college-level)** are **three times more likely** to successfully complete 20-credit hours than those who do not.
- Fall-to-spring retention was a significant predictor of successfully completing 20-credit hours during the first year. **Students who returned in the spring following their initial fall term were more than 500 times as likely to achieve this milestone.**

After reflecting on these first-year findings, it is important to consider the potential implications for action. Further research or investigation may focus on the following:

- What support structures exist for guiding and supporting students who are least likely to achieve the 20-credit hour milestone? See potential ideas noted in Appendix B: High Impact Student Success Strategies.
 - Students with developmental education needs
 - Black students
 - First-time-in-college students
 - Students with low first semester GPAs
- How can we encourage and support more students to enroll full-time?
- How can part-time students be encouraged to continue enrolled from one term/year to the next?
- How can we help transfer students understand the importance of completing an ECC degree prior to transferring?
- What affective and/or learning skills can we help first-year students develop?
- What more could we do to support students with regard to:
 - Clearly define academic pathways
 - Coordinated student-centered class scheduling
 - Critical reflection to promote students' life balance
 - Well-defined support structures
 - Outreach to connect and engage students in- and out-of-the-classroom

Second-Year Milestones

The third and final step in the analysis of who is most likely to complete/transfer within three years includes what were deemed to be the most important milestones that occur in a student's second year. Of all the measures examined, **successful completion of 40-credit hours is the most significant milestone for students to achieve.** Students who achieved this milestone were **more than five times as likely to complete/transfer within three years** as their peers who completed fewer hours successfully (A-C grades). Thus the more hours completed successfully the greater the chances of success. Moreover, students who successfully completed college-level math within the first three years were more likely to graduate/transfer, even after controlling for the other factors already discussed above.

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Due to the profound impact of the 40-credit hour milestone on student success, a follow-up analysis was conducted. As with the previous step, this analysis used the achievement of 40-credit hours as the outcome, rather than completion or transfer. Student characteristics were again entered, followed by the same first-year milestones step, and then the remaining milestones discussed above. The results included:

- Students who are **college-ready upon entry to ECC in all three subjects were twice as likely to successfully complete 40-credit hours as well** as those with **higher high school grade point averages** (for every one point increase the odds of success improve).
- Those **least likely** to achieve the 40-hour milestone are students who are: **(1) enrolled part-time, (2) transfer majors, (3) Black, or (4) male**. For this group, unlike for the 20-credit hour milestone, being a first-time-in-college student had no impact on this outcome.
- Students who **successfully complete the highest level of developmental math within three years (or place into college-level)** are **three times more likely** to successfully complete 40-credit hours than those who do not.
- College grade point average (GPA) impacted the likelihood of success. **For every grade point, the likelihood of success increased**. Students with the lowest high school GPA's were least likely to successfully complete 40-hours.
- Students who **successfully complete college-level math or writing** are **three times more likely** to successfully complete 40-credit hours.
- Fall-to-fall retention was a significant predictor of successfully completing 40-credit hours during the first two years. **Students who returned in the fall term following their initial fall term were more than 90 times as likely to achieve this milestone**.

After reflecting on these second-year findings, the potential opportunities for improvement closely follow those listed on page 11. Although the possible directions for improvement can seem daunting, it is encouraging to note that efforts to improve success for first-year milestones will likely have a trickle effect and/or can also be adapted to promote second-year milestone improvement.

Developmental Climb

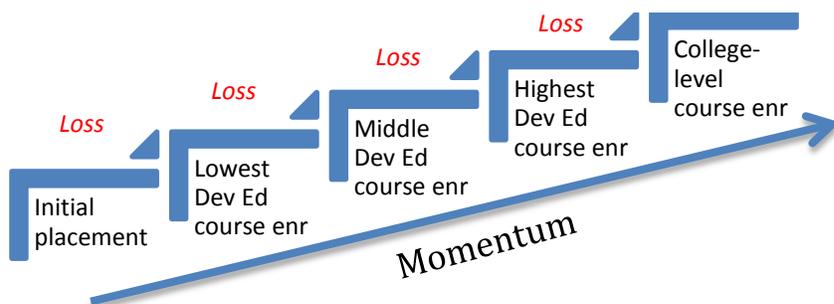
As the previous analysis indicates, successfully completing 20- credit hours by the end of year one and the 40-credit hours by the end of year two are the two most important predictors of a student's likelihood to complete and/or transfer within 3 years. A common finding among in both analyses was achievement of certain milestones within developmental coursework had significant impacts on the credit hour milestones.

Given that students' progression through developmental education to college-level coursework has been identified in the national literature as a major opportunity for improving student success, one final set of analyses were conducted to examine how developmental achievement milestones impact credit hour attainment without a direct impact on actual graduation or transfer rates. The following sections

outline key findings of an analysis of rates students with different placements progress through, or stop out of, the developmental sequence.

The following graphic illustrates the different developmental milestones examined:

Figure 7: Developmental Education Milestones & Loss Points



Developmental Placement and Enrollment

The fall 2008 cohort of new degree and certificate-seeking students was used for the analysis presented in this section as it allows students in the cohort a full three years to complete the success measures, which is a standard window used in most success analyses. Within each of these milestones, the numbers of students in the cohort who were eligible to progress but did not are also included to clearly highlight where loss points occur.

The percentage of new students who are college-ready in all subject areas has been increasing over the last five years: 15% of the 2006 new student cohort (309 of 2079) to 22% for the 2010 cohort (495 of 2239)⁸. On the other hand, students with three developmental needs have remained consistent the last five years at approximately 12%. Students with two developmental needs are most likely to need math and writing (approximately 11%). Of those who have developmental needs, nearly forty percent require math remediation.

Beyond placement results, it is important to monitor whether or not students actually enroll in the courses in which they were placed. Failure to enroll in key prerequisite courses significantly limits course registration options due to an increasing number of courses with minimum competency requirements. Analyses of the fall 2008 new students who completed placement testing and enrolled in developmental coursework are highlighted below:

- Approximately **20% of new students who took any placement tests did not enroll in any of the respective developmental ENG, RDG or MTH courses in their sequence within 3 years.** This held true regardless of specific placement level (developmental or college-level).

⁸Source: Institutional Research Milestone Analysis, fall 2012

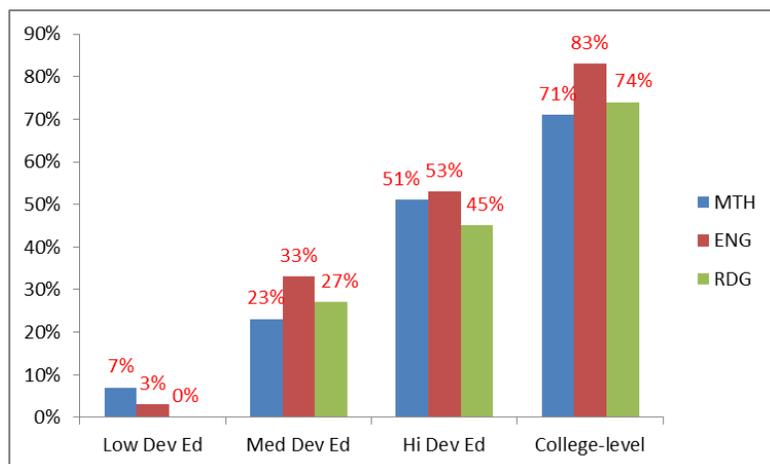
- Nearly **one-quarter** (24%) of students who placed into the **lowest level of developmental math did not enroll** in their placement course. **19%** of students with a **MTH096 placement did not enroll** in their placement course. **14%** of students with a **MTH098 placement did not enroll** in their placement course.
- Students who placed into the **lowest level of developmental writing were the least likely to enroll** in their placement course – only 11 of 31 enrolled (65% loss) within the first three years. **11-12% students with ENG097 and ENG098 placements did not enroll** in their placement within the first three years. **17%** of new students with a **college-level writing placement did not enroll** in their placement course.
- Students who placed into the **lowest level of developmental reading were the least likely to enroll** – only 1 of 7 enrolled (86% loss) within the first three years. **20% of students who placed into RDG090 and 14% who placed into RDG091 did not enroll** in their placement course. The proxy college-level course for reading used was ENG101. 26% of students with a college-level reading placement did not enroll in ENG101 within the first three years.

Developmental Coursework

Figure 5 highlights very few students with the greatest developmental needs, in any subject area, make it to college-level coursework within three years. The rates progressively increase as students have fewer remediation needs; however, there are large numbers who do not achieve college-level coursework.

The following figure summarizes the percentage of students in the new student cohort who reach college-level based on their starting placement-level. As one might expect, the further below college-level coursework the student places the harder it is for them to ever advance to college-level coursework.

Figure 8: Percent of Cohort Enrolled in College-Level by Initial Placement Level



Source: Developmental Climb dataset, 8/24/12

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Digging into this data more deeply, there are very specific **notable loss points** within the developmental education curricula:

- Students who **begin in RDG091 but do not enroll in ENG101** (115 of 237 do not progress; 42%)
- Students who **begin in ENG098 but do not enroll in ENG101** (131 of 322 do not progress; 36%)
- Students who **begin in MTH098 but do not enroll in college-level math** (76 of 186 do not progress; 35%)
- Students who **begin in MTH096 but do not enroll in MTH098** (76 of 186 do not progress; 33%)

From these analyses, we identified major loss points for students before they enter their developmental education coursework and during the completion of that coursework. [Refer to Appendix A for additional details.] As noted in previous sections, further research or investigation may focus on the following:

- Should students with developmental placements be required to begin them in the first semester?
- Do students understand the importance of beginning their developmental coursework?
- Are the placement-testing methods meeting student needs? Do they provide enough information?
- How can we help students better navigate their developmental courses? Some ideas include:
 - Prescribed schedules
 - Communications post-testing and/or each semester
- What cognitive and metacognitive skills can we help students develop?
- What affective skills can we help students with developmental coursework needs develop?
- What support structures are in place to identify and support students with developmental coursework needs? See potential ideas noted in Appendix B: High Impact Student Success Strategies.

FY2013 Student Success Goals

The college's recently adopted FY13-17 Strategic Plan is centered on improving student success. Among the six institutional goals, three specifically focus on student success:

1. Foster a learning-centered environment
2. Promote student goal completion
3. Promote a climate of collaboration, equity and inclusion for all college constituencies

In order to successfully accomplish these institutional goals over the next five years, the college must establish annual benchmarks and plans specifically targeting efforts to improve student success. Annual student success targets have not previously been established at Elgin Community College. These may include specific percentage improvements for different milestone measurements. Having the targets defined will provide valuable direction for the new Student Success Teams and Taskforces.

Conclusion

In closing, this report provides Elgin Community College with its first annual comprehensive analysis of the status of student success. The next step is to use this data to establish annual student success goals. These goals can provide benchmarks for which the Student Success Teams and Taskforces as well as college departments can use to focus their efforts. Furthermore, as specific strategies for meeting these goals are identified they will be compiled and added to this report. These additions are critical elements of establishing a written annual plan to guide our student success improvement efforts.

Having such a plan will assist the College in clarifying what aspects of student success require attention, providing a more coherent focus for student success related work, providing a method for communicating the many efforts to the college community, and a vehicle for recording our progress.

Lastly, the analyses used in this report are one of many ways the college can better understand student success. As these findings are discussed, we anticipate requests for additional analyses. The offices of Student & Academic Effectiveness and Institutional Research welcome your input and recommendations for additional ways we can improve our understanding of what impacts student success. This knowledge will help us make more informed decisions.

Appendix A: Developmental Education Momentum & Loss

The following tables summarize the progression of new student cohorts starting at the point of initial placement (level placed) through enrollment in the initial developmental course and beyond. Each row highlights progression through the developmental coursework for new students who placed into that course. Reading the table horizontally, note the number and percentage of students who are “lost”, or don’t continue any further, in the developmental sequence (as indicated in the “Loss” row within each course).

The columns on the far right illustrate the percentage of the students with X placement who enrolled in college-level coursework (% Placed Enr College-Level) and the percentage of students with X placement who enrolled in the initial placement then progressed to college-level. Both measures are useful as indicators of the degree to which students at each placement level even begin the developmental sequence, as well as those who ultimately complete it.

This analysis of loss points illustrates the lower a student begins in the developmental sequence, in any discipline, the less likely they will be to progress through to college-level coursework. Keep in mind, this analysis focused on mere enrollment in coursework. A follow-up step in this discussion would be to examine the students that successfully progress through developmental education (grades A-C).

Below are tables summarizing the data for Math, writing (English), and Reading.

Developmental Math

Math Momentum & Loss										% Placed Enr College- Level	% Enr DE - Enr College- Level
Enrollments in Fall 2008 through Summer 2011											
	Level Placed	# Placed	MTH090 Enr	MTH096 Enr	MTH098 Enr	MTH100+ Enr					
Fall 2008 Cohort = 1541*	MTH090	306	232 ---->	128 ---->	58 ---->	22				7%	9%
	Loss		-74 -24%	-104 -34%	-70 -23%	-36 -12%					
	MTH096	554	----->	447 ---->	262 ---->	128				23%	29%
	Loss			-107 -19%	-185 -33%	-134 -24%					
	MTH098	217	----->	----->	186 ---->	110				51%	59%
	Loss					-31 -14%	-76 -35%				
	MTH100+	464	----->	----->	----->	337				73%	73%
	Loss						-127 -27%				

*Includes only new students who completed placement testing and began fall 2008

Developmental Writing

Writing Momentum & Loss

Enrollments in Fall 2008 through Summer 2011

		Level Placed	# Placed	ENG094 Enr	ENG097 Enr	ENG098 Enr	ENG101 Enr	% Placed Enr College- Level	% Enr DE - Enr College- Level
Fall 2008 Cohort = 1450*	ENG094		31	11 ---->	5 ---->	2 ---->	1	3%	9%
	Loss			-20 -65%	-6 -19%	-3 -10%	-1 -3%		
	ENG097		201	----->	176 ---->	107 ---->	66	33%	38%
	Loss				-25 -12%	-69 -34%	-41 -20%		
	ENG098		360	----->	----->	322 ---->	191	53%	59%
	Loss					-38 -11%	-131 -36%		
	ENG101		858	----->	----->	----->	708	83%	83%
	Loss						-150 -17%		

*Includes only new students who completed placement testing and began fall 2008

Developmental Reading

Reading Momentum & Loss

Enrollments in Fall 2008 through Summer 2011

		Level Placed	# Placed	RDG085 Enr	RDG090 Enr	RDG091 Enr	College- level Enr	% Placed Enr College- Level	% Enr DE - Enr College- Level
Fall 2008 Cohort = 1500*	RDG085		7	1 ---->	0 ---->	0 ---->	0	0%	0%
	Loss			-6 -86%	-1 -14%	0 0%	0 0%		
	RDG090		121	----->	97 ---->	63 ---->	33	27%	34%
	Loss				-24 -20%	-34 -28%	-30 -25%		
	RDG091		274	----->	----->	237 ---->	122	45%	51%
	Loss					-37 -14%	-115 -42%		
	College-level		1098	----->	----->	----->	808	74%	83%
	Loss						-290 -26%		

*Includes only new students who completed placement testing and began fall 2008

Appendix B: High-Impact Student Success Strategies

Departments and teams may consider the following strategies that have been demonstrated to have a high impact on improving student success. The Association of American Colleges and Universities⁹ as well as the Center for Community College Student Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin¹⁰ have independently engaged in large-scale research to identify and promote high-impact educational practices. The practices highlighted include empirically validated pedagogical approaches that unfold over an extended period of time and benefit all students. Moreover, research has found when students engage in more than one of these experiences they combine to have the greater the impact on their success. The practices include:

First-Year Experiences – The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies.

Common Intellectual Experiences – Set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community. These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and co-curricular options for students.

Learning Communities – The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors.

Writing-Intensive Courses – These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines (i.e., repeated practice).

Collaborative Assignments and Projects – Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research – The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions in all disciplines.

Diversity/Global Learning – Courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” such as racial, ethnic, and gender

⁹ For more information visit AACU’s website at <http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>

¹⁰ For more information visit CCSSE’s website at <http://www.ccsse.org/center/highimpact/index.cfm>

inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning – Field-based “experiential learning” with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences.

Internships –Increasingly common form of experiential learning where students gain direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field.

Capstone Courses and Projects – These culminating experiences require students nearing the end of an educational experience to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they’ve learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of “best work,” or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

Developmental Education – Additional research has demonstrated the value of the following high-impact developmental education interventions¹¹:

1. Interventions aimed at helping students avoid developmental education by shoring up their skills before they enroll in college
2. Interventions designed to accelerate students’ progress through developmental education by shortening the timing or content of their developmental education courses
3. Programs that provide contextualized basic skills together with occupational or college-content coursework
4. Programs that enhance the supports for developmental-level learners, such as advising, supplemental instruction, learning communities, etc.
5. Embedding learning skills (active learning, metacognition, critical thinking, collaborating, etc.) within disciplinary content
6. Faculty professional development to increase skills in working with developmental and first-year students

It is important to note that each institution must evaluate each of these approaches fully to determine if it is feasible as well as whether or not it would be of interest to its students, faculty, and staff. No one size fits all. And simply because an approach has been validated to have high impact on student success, its implementation and on-going assessment is critical to its effectiveness on any one college.

¹¹ MDRC in 2011 “[Unlocking the Gate](#)”; Community College Research Center [Developmental Education research](#); Postsecondary Literacy: [Coherence in Theory, Terminology, and Teacher Preparation](#)

Appendix C: Logistic Regression Analysis

The use of logistic regression analysis allows for a systematic investigation of the relationship that many of the milestones and momentum points discussed in this report have on student success from a longitudinal perspective, because the influence of each measure on the outcome are analyzed collectively. The impact of each measure or characteristic already takes into account any influence that other measures or characteristics already had on the outcome.

The end result is a predictive model that indicates the independent influence of each student characteristic/achievement on the likelihood of completion or transfer to a four-year institution. The influence of each measure is reported as a change in the odds of being a student who completes or transfers within three years as the given measure changes. This type of analysis allows for generalizations about the relationships between the predicting variables and the outcome, such as: “the likelihood of completion/transfer increase when comparing students who initially enroll full-time versus those who initially enroll part-time”, or “the likelihood of completion/transfer increased for every point in a student’s first-term GPA at ECC”.