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Testimony to the Select Committee on Community Colleges
The State of Community Colleges

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ARCC Reports had Many Shortcomings

- Since IHELP opened in 2001, much of our works has focused on student success in the CCC – how to measure it and how policy can be changed to improve student outcomes
- Pointed to shortcomings of CCC’s efforts to measure student success in annual Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC) report
 - Many measures were simple counts of activities, not rates of success
 - Primary success rate – Student Progress and Attainment Rate (SPAR) – excluded too many students
 - Data were not disaggregated for sub-populations of students (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender)
 - Excessive length (800+ pages) of report limited its value as a basis for policy discussion or as a means for students and families to learn about the colleges

Student Success Scorecards are a Significant Improvement

- *Outcomes are reported for more CCC Students*
 - Through expanded definition of “degree seeking,” the SPAR now measures outcomes for over half of incoming CCC students compared to about 40% in ARCC reports
 - Additional students included in new completion rate for Career Technical Education (CTE) programs
- *Milestone measures are improved*
 - Several metrics allow colleges to monitor progress in reaching milestones to understand where students may get stalled along the way – persistence over 3 consecutive terms, completing 30 credits, portion of remedial students who complete a college-level course
- *Data are disaggregated*
 - Closing the gaps in educational achievement is essential to ensuring the state’s social and economic health
 - Breakdowns by race, age, gender and college readiness will help colleges identify these gaps and take steps to reduce them
- *Format is more accessible and useful*
 - Scorecard website is easy to use – accessible for students/families, faculty, staff
 - Additional layers of data allow for more analysis
 - Datamart allows for the cross-tabulation of scorecard metrics (e.g., seeing a measure by gender within race)
 - Data-on-Demand system makes even more detailed data accessible to researchers at the colleges to facilitate additional analyses aimed at institutional improvement

- Improvement still possible, but is the most transparent accountability system we have seen

Trends Show Importance of Monitoring Student Success and Taking Action

- Completion rate down 3 percentage points in last 5 years, more so for remedial students
- But rates of reaching milestones are up – somewhat more students persisting, earning 30 units
- Maybe some economic factors, but budget cuts likely play a large role – course section cuts in CCC limiting opportunities to complete programs, capacity constraints in universities limiting transfer opportunities
- Student Success Scorecard is a good tool, but should be expanded as more and better data become available and must be used broadly inside and outside of the colleges if it is to help move the needle on student success

Success Measure	Starting Year Cohort				
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Completion (SPAR)	52.3%	51.3%	51.3%	50.8%	49.2%
Prepared (27%)	72.4%	72.2%	71.8%	72.1%	71.2%
Remedial (73%)	45.0%	43.9%	43.9%	43.0%	41.1%
Persistence	63.6%	67.8%	66.5%	66.0%	65.8%
Prepared	58.2%	64.4%	62.8%	62.2%	62.2%
Remedial	65.7%	69.1%	68.0%	67.5%	67.3%
30 Units	63.6%	65.1%	65.0%	66.0%	66.4%
Prepared	66.6%	69.6%	68.9%	69.6%	70.1%
Remedial	62.6%	63.5%	63.6%	64.7%	65.1%