

UC ACCORD Success Conditions: Indicators and Metrics

Nancy Shulock
Caroline West
UC ACCORD Team Meeting
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UC ACCORD Pathways Indicators Project

- Purpose: Explore feasibility of community college “indicators report” on institutional conditions in support of student success
- Framework: Used ACCORD’s five success conditions:
 - For each *condition*, identified *indicators* and *metrics*
 - Used selection criteria to choose among possible options
- Methods:
 - Literature search to identify potential research-based indicators
 - Exploration of available data sources
 - Matched data to indicators where possible; identified gaps

Possible Uses/Audiences for an Indicators Report

- **Indicators can be used for:**
 - Public accountability
 - To lawmakers (resource allocation; policy development)
 - To consumers (attendance and employment decisions)
 - Institutional effectiveness
 - Search for effective practices
 - Resource reallocation
 - Communicate goals and monitor compliance
- **And can be used by:**
 - The college (administration and trustees)
 - The system (Chancellor's Office and Board of Governors)
 - State lawmakers
 - Accreditors (WASC)
 - Public users (students and employers)
 - Researchers

Conditions

- College commitment to student success
- High quality instruction and curriculum
- Ongoing advising and monitoring
- Integration of support services and resources
- Streamlined pathways to completion

Maintained Pathways five-part structure, although many factors that promote success contribute to two or more conditions

Indicators: Operationalizing the Conditions

Indicators identify more specific processes, relationships, policies, or other factors that contribute to one of the conditions

- Challenges in defining indicators
 - No one best way – diversity of effective approaches
 - Getting to “quality” in relationships, processes, human interactions
- Criteria for selecting among myriad possible indicators
 1. Informed by research
 2. Accommodating multiple missions
 3. Sufficiently broad to allow institutions to design effective solutions specific to their populations
 4. Designed and implemented from a student’s point of view
 5. Courageous in the face of resistance

Condition 1: College commitment to success

Indicators

- Strategic plan focuses on success
- Collaborative efforts across instruction and student support services
- Distributed advising system
- Robust institutional research office, integrated with operations
- Messaging
- Faculty commitment

Condition 2: High Quality Instruction & Curriculum

Indicators

- Faculty help students understand program coherence
- Faculty development emphasizes innovative and effective pedagogy
- Faculty adopt new pedagogy as appropriate
- Faculty have high expectations of students
- Focus on skills relevant to employment or transfer
- Policies encourage completion and enforce prerequisites
- Institutional research informs faculty advancement

Condition 3: Ongoing Advising and Monitoring

Indicators

- Sufficient resources
- Mandatory orientation and advising
- Early warning system
- Continuing access to matriculation services (availability when student is ready)

Condition 4: Integration of Support Services & Resources

Indicators

- Staff members provide services and referrals proactively
- Student services are conveniently located and easily accessible

Condition 5: Streamlined Pathways to Completion

Indicators

- Clear messages to K-12 about preparation
- Pre-assessment help is available
- Continuous improvement efforts in articulation
- Incentives promote successful enrollment behaviors (e.g. priority registration for regular progress toward degree)
- Roadmaps to program completion are available
- Class schedules facilitate progress
- Focus on pathways beyond the CCC

Metrics: Measuring Extent/Quality of Indicator

- Challenges in selecting metrics
 - Measuring qualitative phenomena (avoid temptation to choose the easily measured)
 - Gaining college cooperation and support
- Criteria for selecting among possible metrics
 1. Aligned with other standards and requirements
 2. Meet the face-validity test
 3. Recognize colleges start at different levels of accomplishment
 4. Rely as much as possible on in-place data collection systems
 5. Possess stability—continuous and consistent data
 6. Number no more than twenty indicators

Major Data Sources for Metrics

- CCC Datamart and other CCC data available to researchers
- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
- Cal-PASS
- Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCSSE at University of Texas, Austin)
- The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)
- Institution websites and catalogs
- Locally available data (not accessible by external audiences)
 - Examples: faculty development data, outreach to middle schools and high schools, assessment test resource

Example of a Condition, Indicator, and Metric Where Data Exist

- Condition: College commitment to success
- Indicator: Faculty demonstrate commitment to student success
- Metric: CCSSE Survey Likert scale item. “Mark the number that best represents the quality of your relationship with ... instructors” with scale from...
 - “available, helpful, sympathetic” to
 - “unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic”

Example of a Condition, Indicator, and Metric Where Data do Not Exist

- Condition: Ongoing advising and monitoring
- Indicator: Early warning system identifies students in need of support
- Metrics:
 - Existence: does a system exist?
 - Utilization: number of messages/enrollment
- Where to get the data? Perhaps a new Success Indicators Survey to be completed by institutions

Information Gaps

- We suggest 26 indicators with approximately 47 metrics, of which 2 exist in fairly reliable form for all institutions.
- 7 more metrics come from the CCSSE; about one-third of CCCs have administered it.
- This leaves the majority of metrics to be gathered by labor-intensive catalog and web searches and/or a survey to be filled out by CCC administrators.
- Given the need to develop and refine metrics and CCC budget problems, most likely near-term use for the indicators work is to stimulate discussion at colleges about:
 - Relative value of various indicators – to set priorities
 - How campuses could use them in local planning and communication

Finding Data: Examples of Metrics where Data are Currently Unavailable in a Centralized Database

- Faculty development
- Strategic Plan
- Collaborative instruction and support services efforts
- Distribution of SLOs to students; common exams
- Withdrawal and late registration policies
- Institutional research staff FTE and research advisory councils
- Early warning system
- Outreach to K-12 to encourage preparation
- Assessment: pre-testing assistance

Improving Data: Example of Importance of Engaging College in Data Collection

Indicator: “Faculty incorporate information about learning into the curriculum”

Metric: Use of CCSSE as placeholder – how often do students:

- Prepare multiple drafts of assignment
- Work with other students on projects during class
- Tutor or teach other students
- Participate in community-based project as part of a regular course

Issues to explore with colleges:

- Campus approaches to improving learning , e.g., “active learning”
- How best to measure it across varied departments and faculty
- Cost of data collection

Next steps

- Ask researchers and experts in the RP group for their reactions to the proposed indicators and metrics
 - see Appendix to report
- Visit a variety of CCC campuses to learn more about the value of certain indicators and what would be involved in collecting the data
- Refine the set of proposed indicators and metrics based on these discussions
- Discuss potential ‘low hanging fruit’ with Chancellor’s Office and others

IHELP Contact Information

Reports and presentations: www.csus.edu/ihelp
ihelp@csus.edu

Reports on community college student success:

Rules of the Game, February 2007

Beyond the Open Door, August 2007

Invest in Success, October 2007

It Could Happen, February 2008

Crafting a Student-Centered Transfer Process in CA, August 2009

Steps to Success, October 2009

Divided We Fail, October 2010

The Road Less Traveled, February, 2011

Sense of Direction, August, 2011

Career Opportunities-Parts 1 and 2, January-February, 2012

