

Key Findings: Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) – 2012 and 2014 – Six (6) Benchmarks

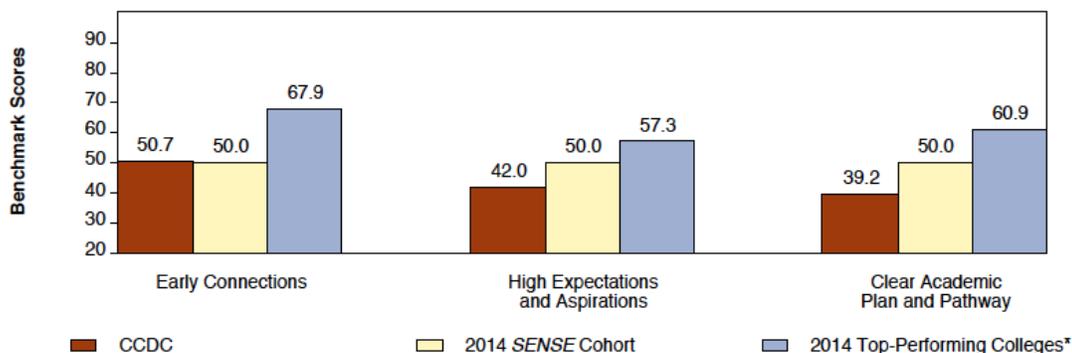
The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address key areas of entering student engagement. At UDC-CC it is administered to entering freshmen. The aim of the survey is to provide colleges with an opportunity to assess students' perceptions of the college experience at a time that is critical to a student's persistence and retention at the college, the beginning. First impressions do count. The results of the SENSE survey help colleges such as UDC-CC assess their capacity to engage with students and determine what changes are needed to support student success. Current research indicates that by focusing on the student experience with the college during the first academic term, colleges can help students succeed, complete courses and earn certificates and degrees. This is a decisive time in the lives of the students and the college.

SENSE Benchmarks

1. **Early Connections:** When students describe their early college experiences, they typically reflect on occasions when they felt discouraged or thought about dropping out. This is prevented by a strong early connection to someone at the college.
2. **High Expectations and Aspirations:** When entering college, students perceive clear, high expectations from college staff and faculty and they are more likely to understand what it takes to be successful and adopt behaviors that lead to achievement. This element measures whether or not students feel that faculty and staff believe that they could succeed.
3. **Clear Academic Plan and Pathway:** When students with knowledgeable assistance can create a road map to show what academic plan to follow and determine how long it will take to reach that goal. This benchmark is related to whether or not they have been provided with a clearly articulated degree maps that they received assistance that helps them sets goals leading to completion.

2014 Results

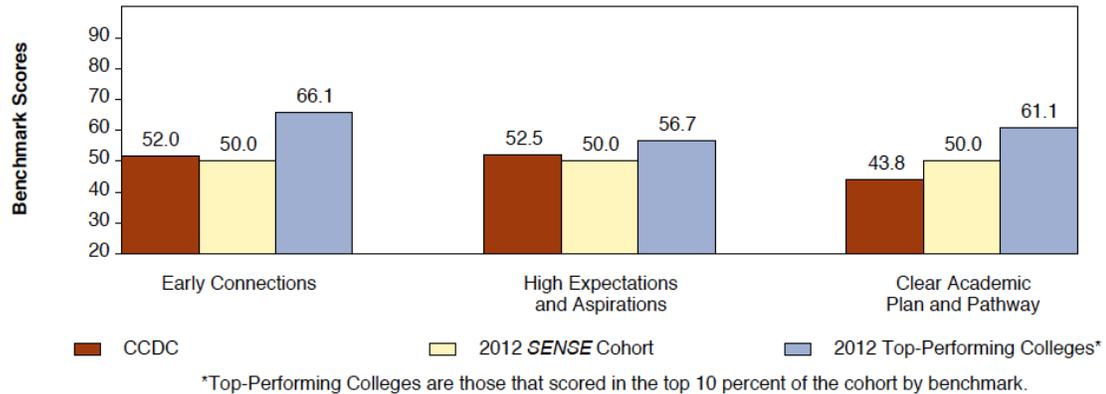
Figure 1a



*Top-Performing Colleges are those that scored in the top 10 percent of the cohort by benchmark.

2012 Results

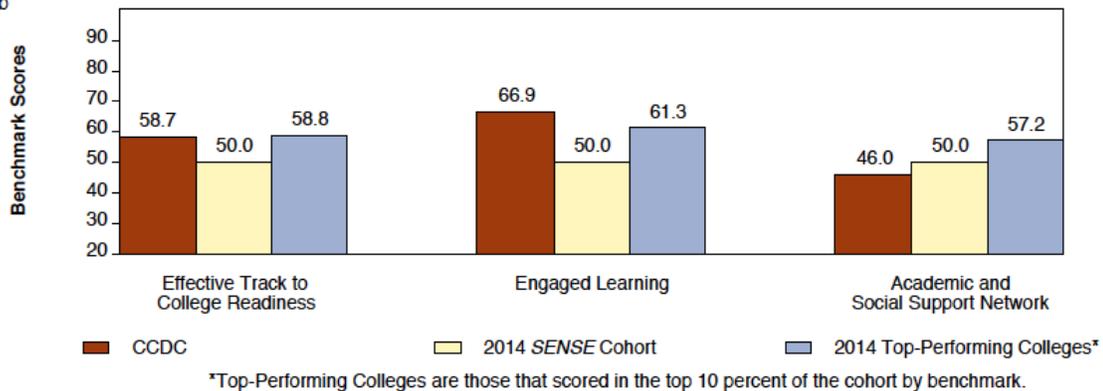
Figure 1a



4. **Effective Track to College Readiness:** The element addresses students' perceptions as to whether or not they have been effectively assess, placed into appropriate courses and receive the necessary supports that help ensure that they build academic skills.
5. **Engaged Learning:** Faculty plan activities that engage students in the learning process.
6. **Academic and Social Support Network:** Entering students perceive that they receive the necessary academic and social supports needed to help them succeed.

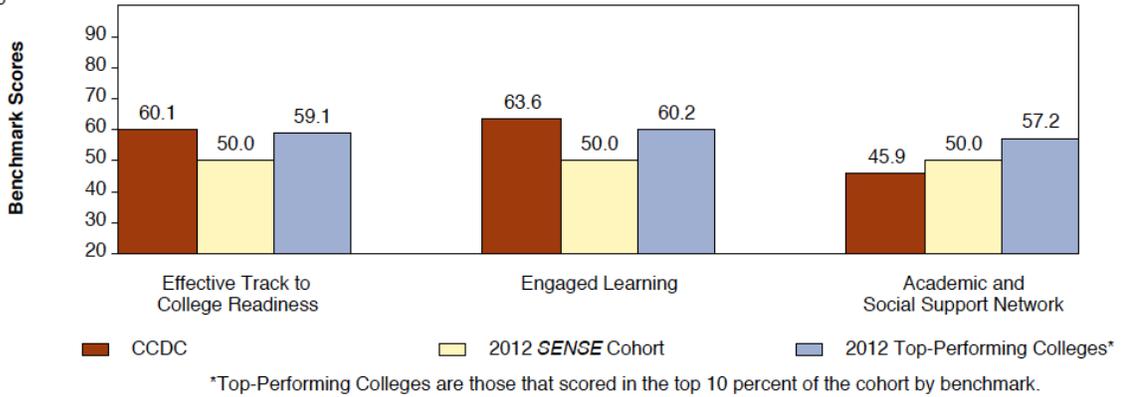
2014 Results

Figure 1b



2012 Results

Figure 1b



The Areas of Student Engagement in which the College received high marks – 2012 and 2014

| Benchmark | Item Number | Item |
|------------------|-------------|--|
| Engaged Learning | 19b | Frequency: Prepared at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in |
| Engaged Learning | 19l | Frequency: Used an electronic tool to communicate with an instructor about coursework |
| Engaged Learning | 19m | Frequency: Discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor |
| Engaged Learning | 19q | Frequency: Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class |
| Engaged Learning | 20f2 | Frequency: Used writing, math, or other skill lab |

2014 Results

Figure 2

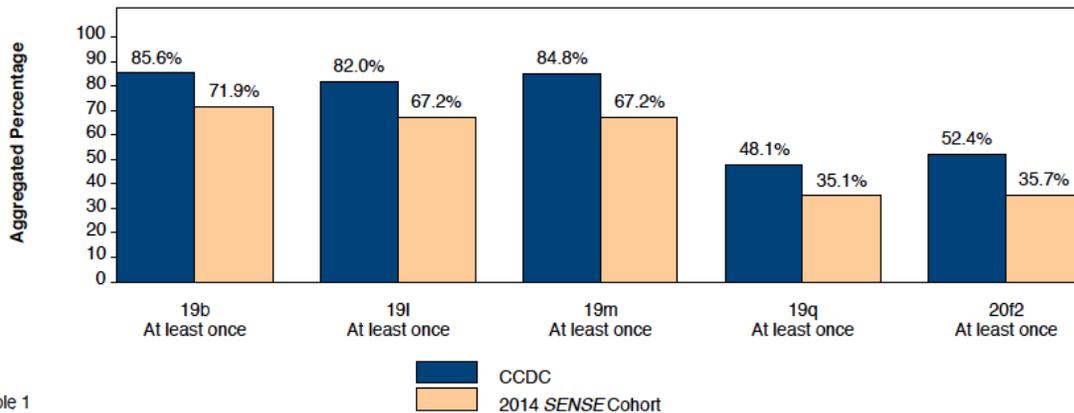


Table 1

2012 Results

Figure 2

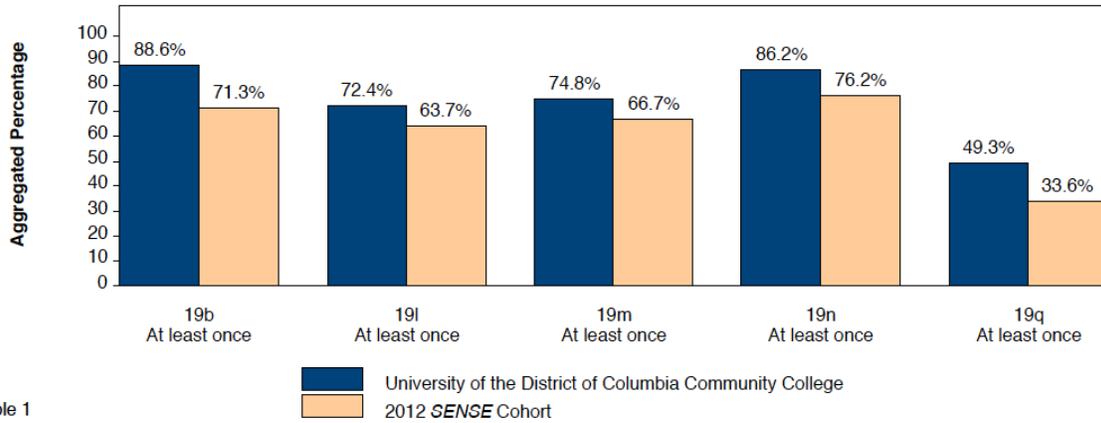


Table 1

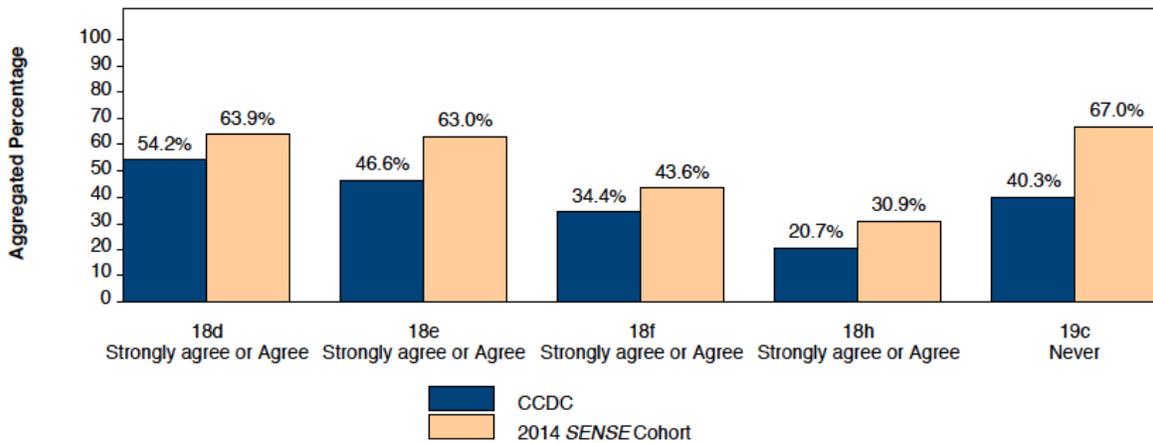
The Areas of Student Engagement in which the College received low marks – 2012 and 2014

Table 2

| Benchmark | Item Number | Item |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 18d | Able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me |
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 18e | An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major |
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 18f | An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them |
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 18h | A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school to help me figure out how many courses to take |
| High Expectations and Aspirations | 19c | Frequency: Turned in an assignment late |

2014 Results

Figure 3

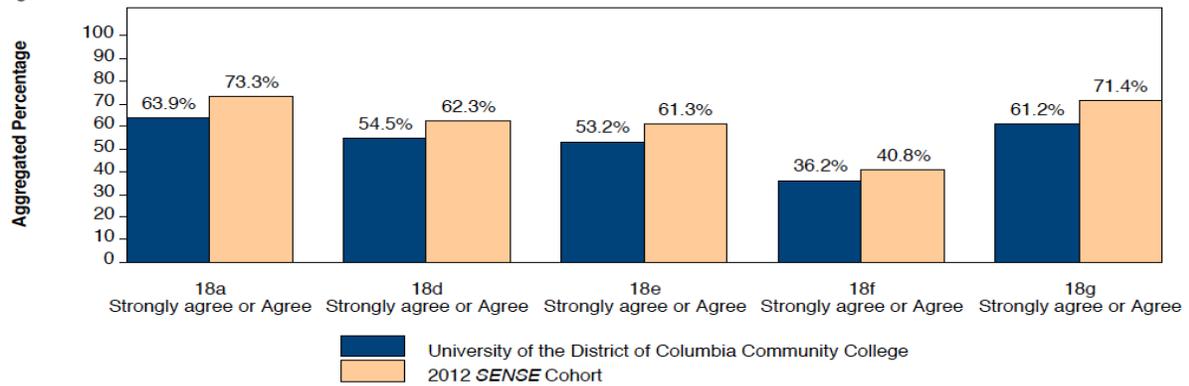


2012 Results

Table 2

| Benchmark | Item Number | Item |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Early Connections | 18a | Felt welcomed at this college |
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 18d | Able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me |
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 18e | An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major |
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 18f | An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them |
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 18g | An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter |

Figure 3



Other Areas Important to Student Success

Areas of Emphasis for 2012

Figure 4: At this college, I completed registration before the first class sessions(s).

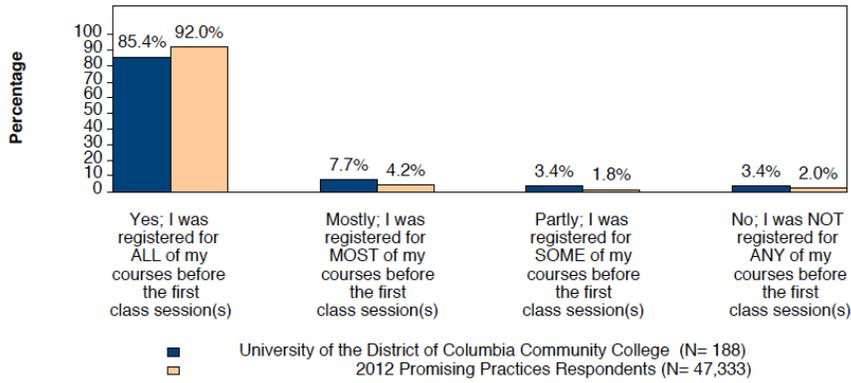


Figure 5: I became aware that I was required to take a placement test (ACCUPLACER, ASSET, COMPASS, etc.) at this college:

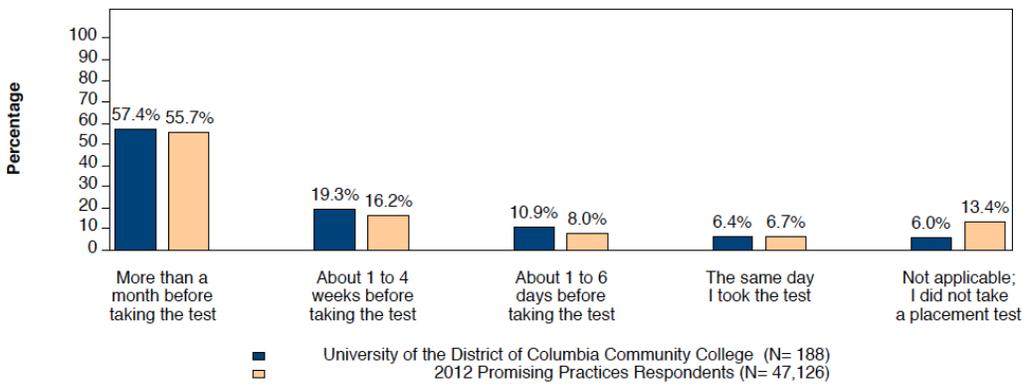


Figure 6: At this college, I am participating in a structured experience for new students (sometimes called a "freshman seminar" or "first-year experience").

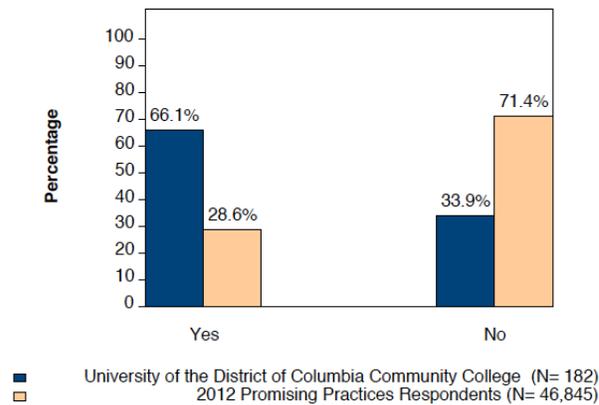


Figure 7: At this college, my instructors clearly explained a class attendance policy that specified how many classes I could miss without penalty.

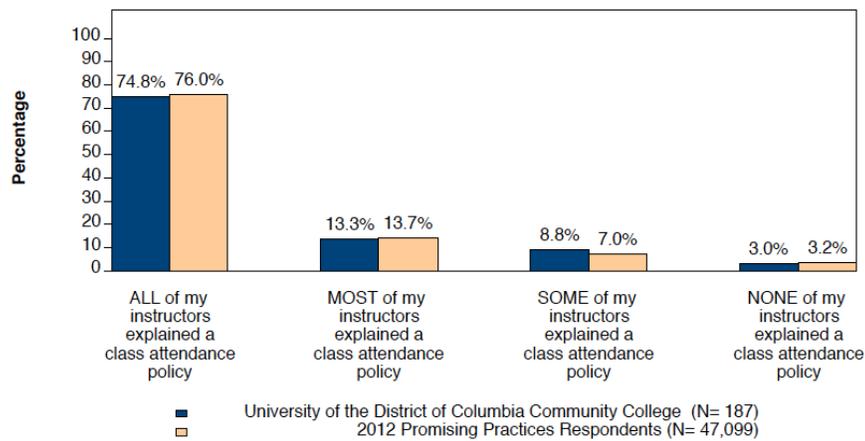
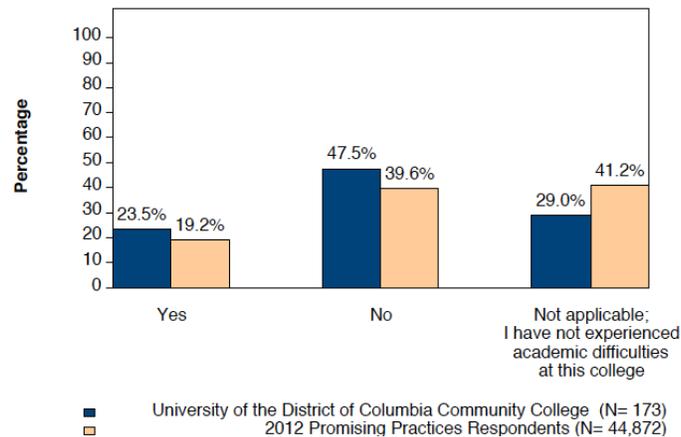


Figure 8: Someone at this college contacts me if I am struggling with my studies to help me get the assistance I need.



2014 – Focus on Academic and Student Support Services

Figure 4: All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college.

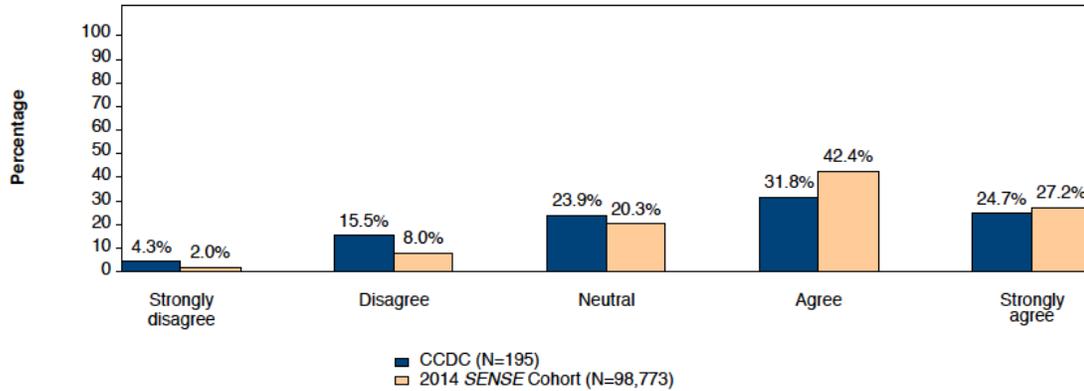


Figure 5: Did you know about academic advising/planning services?

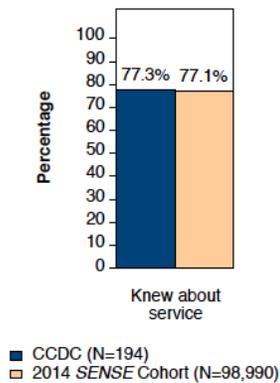


Figure 6: If so, how often did you use academic advising/planning services?

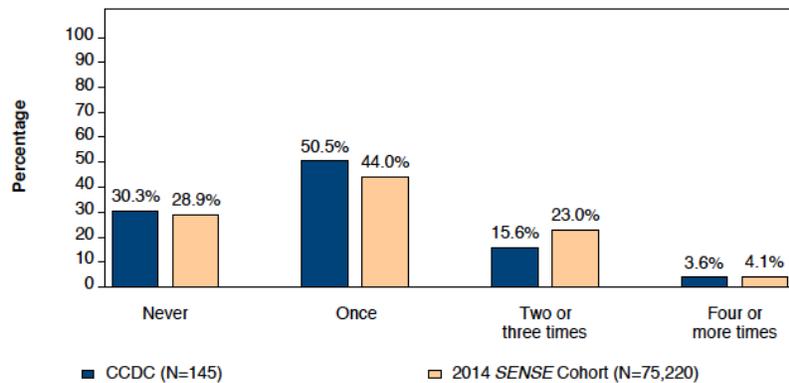


Figure 7: Did you know about career counseling services?

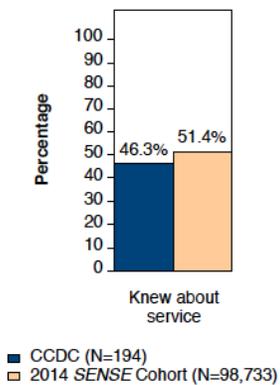


Figure 8: If so, how often did you use career counseling services?

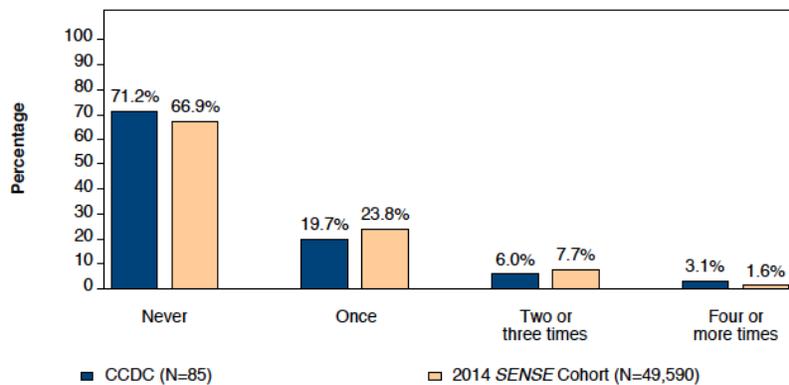


Figure 9: Did you know about face-to-face tutoring services?

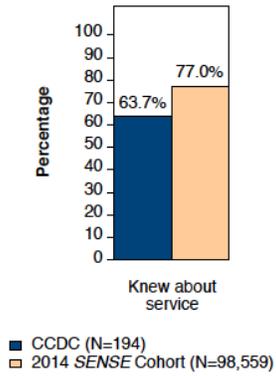


Figure 10: If so, how often did you use face-to-face tutoring services?

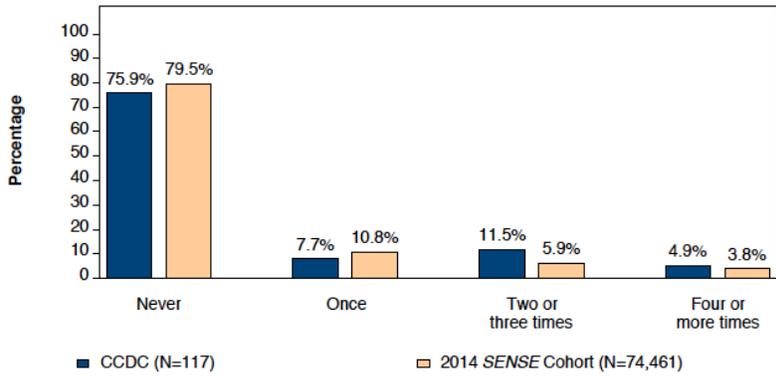


Figure 11: Did you know about writing, math, or other skill lab services?

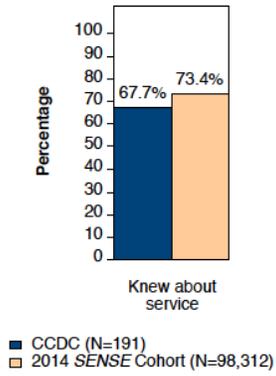
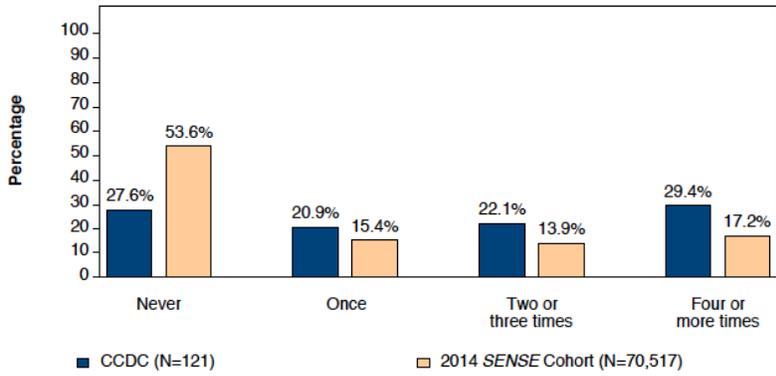


Figure 12: If so, how often did you use writing, math, or other skill lab services?



2014 Results

Academic Goal Setting and Planning

Most community colleges have academic and goal setting policies that are intended to help all students *start right*. Yet, often these policies, even when they are ostensibly mandatory, might not be implemented in ways that ensure success for all students. The disaggregated data below illustrate the student experience with academic goal setting and planning at your college. Nationally, more than 60% of community college students are enrolled less than full time. Thus, while looking at these data, it is important to consider the institution's enrollment patterns. Are all of your entering students starting right?

Figure 13

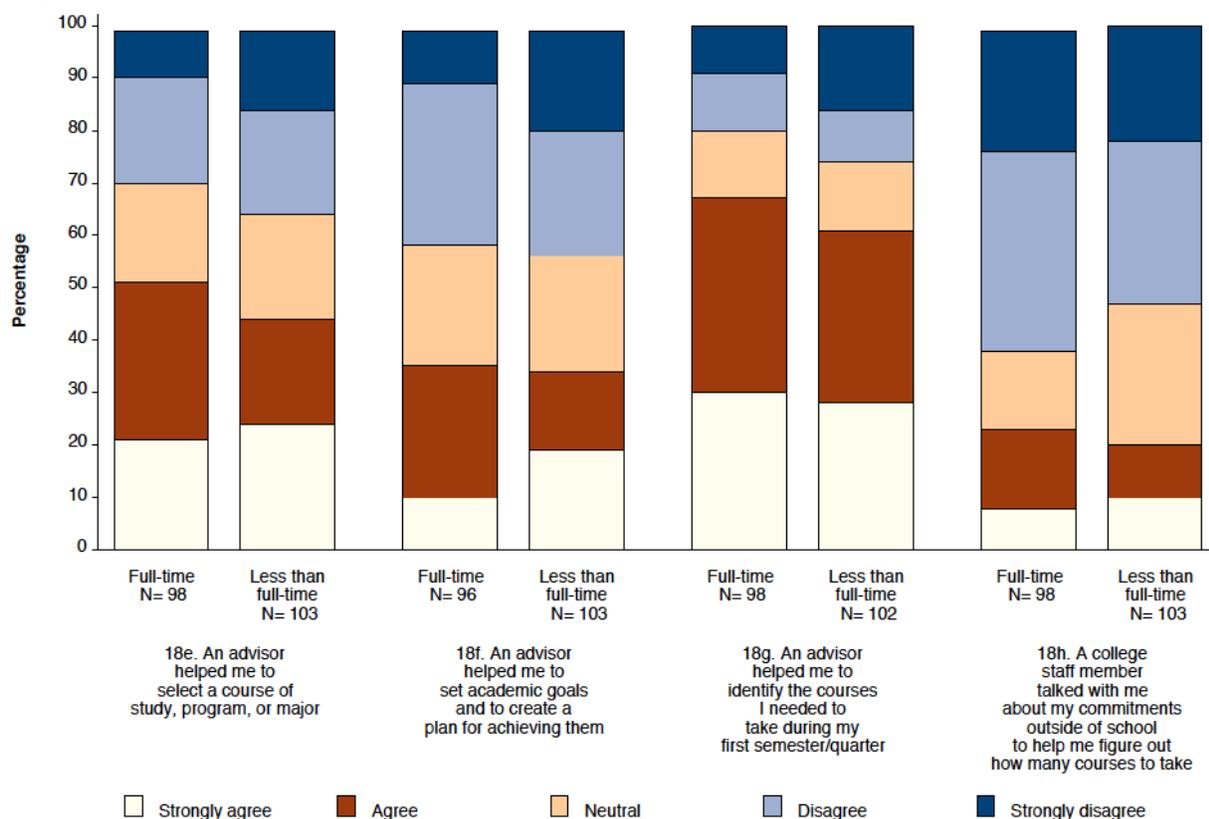


Table 3

| Response | 18e | | 18f | | 18g | | 18h | |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| | Full-time | Less than full-time |
| Strongly agree | 21.4% | 24.3% | 10.4% | 19.4% | 29.6% | 28.4% | 8.2% | 9.7% |
| Agree | 29.6% | 20.4% | 25.0% | 14.6% | 36.7% | 33.3% | 15.3% | 9.7% |
| Neutral | 19.4% | 20.4% | 22.9% | 22.3% | 13.3% | 12.7% | 15.3% | 27.2% |
| Disagree | 20.4% | 20.4% | 31.3% | 24.3% | 11.2% | 9.8% | 37.8% | 31.1% |
| Strongly disagree | 9.2% | 14.6% | 10.4% | 19.4% | 9.2% | 15.7% | 23.5% | 22.3% |

2012 Results

Figure 9

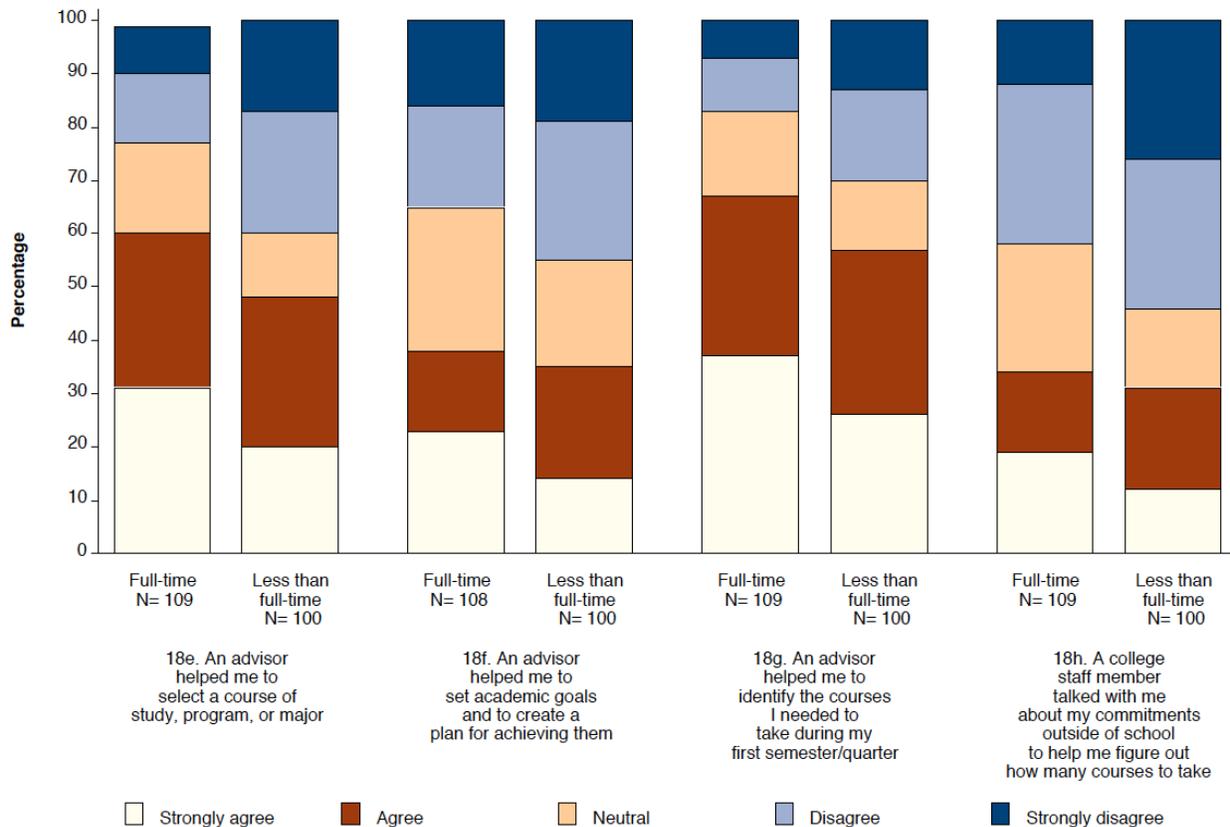


Table 3

| Response | 18e | | 18f | | 18g | | 18h | |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| | Full-time | Less than full-time |
| Strongly agree | 31.2% | 20.0% | 23.1% | 14.0% | 36.7% | 26.0% | 19.3% | 12.0% |
| Agree | 29.4% | 28.0% | 14.8% | 21.0% | 30.3% | 31.0% | 14.7% | 19.0% |
| Neutral | 17.4% | 12.0% | 26.9% | 20.0% | 15.6% | 13.0% | 23.9% | 15.0% |
| Disagree | 12.8% | 23.0% | 19.4% | 26.0% | 10.1% | 17.0% | 30.3% | 28.0% |
| Strongly disagree | 9.2% | 17.0% | 15.7% | 19.0% | 7.3% | 13.0% | 11.9% | 26.0% |

Discussion and Recommendations:

| Benchmark | 2014 Scores | 2012 Scores |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Early Connections | 50.7 | 52.0 |
| High Expectations and Aspirations | 42.0 | 52.5 |
| Clear Academic Plan and Pathway | 39.2 | 43.8 |
| Effective Track to College Readiness | 58.7 | 60.1 |
| Engaged Learning | 66.9 | 63.6 |
| Academic and Social Support Network | 46.0 | 45.9 |

Discussion

Comparing the two years 2014 and 2012, one can conclude from the results of the survey that in compared to the students who completed the survey in 2012, students who entered in 2014 in their early encounters with the College, feel less connected, do not feel that faculty and staff believe that they can succeed, were not provided with clear degree maps and did not received assistance that can help them set goals leading to completion. Further, compared to those students who entered the College in 2012, students entering the College in 2014 felt that they were not properly assessed and as a result were placed in courses that did not match their knowledge and skills. These same students also felt that did not receive the necessary supports that will help them succeed in these courses. On the other hand, compared to their counterparts who entered in 2012, the students in 2014 reported that faculty were more engaging and felt that from the beginning they received the necessary academic and social supports needed to help them succeed.

Compared to the top 10 performing colleges in the nation, the College underperforms in the first three benchmarks. However, the College performed at the same level or higher on Effective Track to College Readiness and Engaged Learning. The College underperformed in the area of Academic and Social Support Network compared to the top 10 colleges in the nation.

Compared to the 2012 and 2014 cohorts nationally, students at the College received high marks in the following five areas. They reported that at least once, they,

- Prepared at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
- Used an electronic tool to communicate with an instructor about Coursework
- Discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor

- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class
- Used writing, math, or other skill lab

However, compared to the national cohort, the College received low scores in the areas of Clear Academic Pathways, High Expectations and Aspirations, and Early Connections. In 2014 students rated the College, strongly agree or agree, and never in the following areas:

- Able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me (Strongly agree or agree – 54.2% compared with 63.9%)
- An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major (Strongly agree or agree – 46.6% compared with 63.0%)
- An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving Them (Strongly agree or agree – 34.4% compared with 43.6%)
- A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school to help me figure out how many courses to take (Strongly agree or agree – 20.7% compared with 30.9%)
- Turned in an assignment late (Never – 40.3% compared to 67.0%)

In 2012 the College received low marks in the following areas:

- Felt welcomed at this college (Strongly agree or agree – 63.9% compared with 73.3%)
- Able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me (Strongly agree or agree – 54.5% compared with 62.3%)
- An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major (Strongly agree or agree – 53.2% compared with 61.3%)
- An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving Them (Strongly agree or agree – 36.2% compared with 40.8%)
- An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter (Strongly agree or agree – 61.2% compared with 71.4%)

The reports also provided feedback to the College in areas that were of interest to students. In 2012 these areas were different from those focused on in 2014. In 2012, 85.4% of students indicated that they had registered for all classes prior to the beginning of class; 57.4% of students were aware that they had to take the ACCUPLACER at least one month before they were required to take the test; 66.1% of the students reported that they were enrolled in the First Year Seminar course; 74.8% of students reported that all of their instructors had explained the attendance policy and specified the number of classes they could miss without penalty; lastly, 47.5% of students reported that no one contacted them to offer help or assistance in the courses in which they were experiencing difficulty.

In 2014, students reported the following:

- 24.7% of instructors explained academic and student support services that were

- available to them.
- 77.3% of students were aware that there was an advising center. However, 50.5% reported that they used the center once since the initial contact and 3.6% used the services for or more times.
 - 46.3% of students were aware that there was career services center. However, 71.2% never visited the center and 19.7% visited the center only once.
 - While 63.7% of students reported that they were aware of the face-to-face tutoring center, 75.9% reported that they never used the services and 7.7% reported that they used the services only one time.
 - 67.7% of students reported that they were aware of the computer lab services, however, 27.6% never visited the lab and 20.9% visited the lab one time so far.

The final element of the SENSE survey dealt with support to students around academic goal setting and planning. The data is reported based on students enrolled full-time or part-time. Students responded to four main questions. An advisor helped me to select a course of study or program or major; an advisor helped me to set academic goal and to create a plan for achieving them; an advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester; and a college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school to help me figure out how many courses to take. With the years 2012 and 2014, students enrolled full and part-time had similar responses. However, compared to 2012, in 2014 less students in both categories selected strongly agree and agree, and more students checked neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

Recommendations

1. This data should be shared with faculty at the 2015 professional development session.
2. Train faculty to complete the early alert reports using Grades First. These alerts can be provided early in the semester instead of at mid-term.
3. New programs of study have been developed that will provide a clearer pathway to degree completion. Students have a clearer view of the pre-requisites that are needed and guarantees have been built into the system that classes will be offered in the semesters designated. Additionally, these pre-requisites have been built into the Banner system so that students cannot register for courses until they have completed the pre-requisites.
4. The College needs to launch an advertisement campaign that focuses on making students more aware of the support services that are available. Note that it was not until 2014 that the College had a full staff of student success specialists.
5. Intentional planning that will facilitate building closer connections between advisors and students are now being fostered with more advisors teaching the First Year Seminar course.
6. More and more advisors have to be deployed to visit classrooms to make students aware of the services the College has to offer.