

Goals

The most important goal of the *Achieving the Dream* initiative is to improve student success at Northern Essex Community College for the growing number of students for whom community colleges are the point of entry into higher education, particularly among student groups that have traditionally faced the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color. Specifically, we will gather data and design strategies to improve over time the percentage of students who:

- Successfully complete developmental courses and progress to credit-bearing courses;
- Enroll in and successfully complete gatekeeper courses;
- Complete the courses they take, with a grade of C or higher;
- Re-enroll from one semester to the next; and
- Earn certificates and degrees.

Guiding Principles

The *Achieving the Dream* initiative at Northern Essex Community College is based on the belief that certain institutional policies, practices and commitments can improve students' chances for success. Recognizing that it is the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and values of the staff and faculty of the college that determine our policies and practices, we will strive to embody these guiding principles for our *Achieving the Dream* initiative:

- Student-centered vision;
- Culture of inquiry, evidence and accountability;
- Commitment to equity and excellence;
- Recognition that long-term impact requires change in systems; and
- Broad-based participation is essential.

Charge

The Data and Assessment Team is charged with overall information management and data analysis as well as guidance and support for outcomes assessment of the *Achieving the Dream* initiative at the college. Responsibilities of the Team include:

1. Work to create a culture of inquiry by engaging students, faculty and staff in dialogue about the data analysis and proposed goals and strategies;
2. Perform the functions of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee;
3. Maintain and improve upon the Institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);
4. Focus on the five Achieving the Dream goals (stated above) to diagnose causes of poor student and/or institutional performance, as well as areas of strength that can be built upon;
5. Create and analyze institutional data to determine the current baselines;
6. Draw upon existing data sources to frame questions;
7. Report on the findings of the data analysis to the Core Team and the College Community; and
8. Work with the Achieving the Dream Strategy Teams to create tools for tracking, measuring, reporting, and analyzing outcomes of objectives described in work plans.

Timeline

The Data and Assessment Team will meet regularly, at least monthly, throughout the 2008-2012 implementation process.

Members

Noemi Custodia-Lora
Thomas Fallon (Data Team Leader)
Jennifer Long
Mark Reinhold

Barbara Stachniewicz
Jim Sullivan
Lorna Walsh