

The Strategy Team for Student Success in Mathematics—led by Linda Murphy and Bill Heineman

- The Math Center continued to be busy in Fall 2010, logging over 2800 contacts with developmental and college-level math students. Data from last spring indicated that more experienced students were most likely to visit the center, so we emphasized outreach to encourage all math students to take advantage of its services. This included 42 classroom visits in Fall 2010 compared to 16 last spring. Qualitative feedback from student evaluations of the center continues to be quite favorable and the staff work hard to respond to suggestions for improvement, including adding Saturday hours in mid-fall. The center began offering one-on-one tutoring sessions in Fall 2010 as well.
- There were seven supplemental instruction (SI) sections of math, science, and writing in Fall 2010 supported by Achieving the Dream and the National Science Foundation Step-Up Grant. We are anxiously awaiting results on student performance in these sections. A major expansion of SI is planned for Spring 2011 with 14 sections including new courses: Applied Technical Mathematics, Basic Math, Basic Algebra I, Anatomy & Physiology II, English Composition I, and Basic Writing. More opportunities for professional development and sharing of ideas among the instructors and the student leaders of the SI sections are being developed.
- About 70 students have taken advantage of non-credit preparation/tutorial courses for the Math Accuplacer assessment exam and College Algebra since summer 2009. There is evidence of student success in math classes taken after these preparation courses, but we are working on ways to encourage more students to enroll in the tutorials and to complete more of the lessons when they do so.
- We recently met our goal of 75 percent of developmental and college level math faculty—both full-time and DCE—participating in professional development activities. This includes workshops provided by Professor Jim Sullivan at the start of the fall semester focused on active learning techniques in the classroom. Attendees' evaluations of these workshops were very positive. Plans for future professional development include a series of Spring 2011 workshops on the book *How People Learn Math* provided by Dr. Christos Zahopoulos, Executive Director of the Center for STEM Education at Northeastern University.
- The math faculty, Math Center staff, and the ATD Math Strategy Team continue to pursue other innovations related to math curriculum, pedagogy, and student support, including looping, outcomes assessment in Basic Algebra II and College Algebra, and refining the use of the new arithmetic module to assure students have the skills they need to succeed in math.

The Strategy Team for Academic Advising for Student Success—led by Grace Young and Nora Sheridan

Policies

- A Mass Transfer Institutional Policy was developed and approved by the Academic Affairs Committee that allows the transfer of "D" within the mass transfer block for students who transfer from any of the State Institutions as long as the overall GPA of the "Block" is a 2.0. All professional staff as well as the Academic Divisions have been trained in the "Mass Transfer Block" and new Mass Transfer Policy.

Placement Cut Scores

- New placement rules have been written and the Assessment Center is ready to implement the new cuts for Fall 2011 enrollment.

Improving Advising and Retention

- *DegreeWorks* training for key staff was completed this fall. Training materials have been developed for college-wide training for both faculty advisors and professional staff advisors that will begin in early spring 2011. A *DegreeWorks* web-based orientation was also created for faculty and staff that will give them an overview of *DegreeWorks*. A link to the orientation was placed under Faculty Services in Self-Service. The web-based orientation of *DegreeWorks* is closed-captioned for faculty and staff.
- In Fall 2010, new and returning students were surveyed in relation to their advising experience; the data will be analyzed and compiled during the Spring 2011 semester.
- The Mass Transfer Block has been successfully built in Banner and is now being noted on students' transcripts upon completion of the requirements.
- The Financial Aid Team conducted additional training on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for most of the Academic Divisions.
- Expanded online advising services will include five faculty members. There are plans for additional departments to go online in Spring 2012.

The Strategy Team for Enhancing the First Year Experience led by Karen Mitchell and Tom Greene

The team is currently

- Collecting data from the revised College Success Seminar (CSS) that was piloted in Fall 2010.
- Continuing the CSS pilot for Spring 2011.

The team has already

- Reviewed data and discussed the team's data needs.
- Created a GANTT chart with the team's timelines and activities.
- Developed a college-level, credit bearing curriculum and created course materials and a course website in Blackboard for the College Success Seminar pilot.
- Provided an intensive training for CSS faculty and introduced the methods for collecting data to help determine the effectiveness and outcomes of the course pilot.
- Hired the NECC marketing team to create a brochure that describes the College Success Seminar.
- Completed the Fall 2010 semester with a pilot of the revised College Success Seminar.

General Goals of the Achieving the Dream national initiative for at-risk students

- 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 better
- Re-enroll from one semester to the next
- Earn certificates and degrees

Guiding Principles

The *Achieving the Dream* initiative at Northern Essex Community College will strive to embody these guiding principles from the *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
- Broad-based participation

Our NECC Goals

(approved by the Core Team from analysis of NECC data by Institutional Research and the Data Team)

1. **Mathematics**
Improve outcomes for all students in developmental and college level math
2. **English Composition**
Improve outcomes for all students in English Composition I
3. **Males in Developmental Reading and Writing**
Improve outcomes for male students in developmental reading and writing
4. **Students 25 Years and younger in Developmental Reading and Writing**
Improve outcomes for students 25 years and younger in developmental reading and writing
5. **Hispanic Students in Writing Courses**
Improve outcomes for Hispanic students in developmental writing, and in the transition into and through college level composition.

Our three strategies to improve success for these at-risk cohorts, to be supported by Achieving the Dream funds

1. Expanding support for math students
2. Improving advising services and academic planning
3. Enhancing the first-year experience

Two further strategies for the cohorts are being pursued in the NECC Academic Master Plan

1. Alignment of objectives for developmental and college-level courses
2. Alignment of NECC curricula with high school curricula

For more information on the Achieving the Dream initiative at NECC, visit the Web site at

<http://www.necc.mass.edu/achievingthedream/index.php>