

Northern Essex Implementation Grant for Achieving the Dream

Northern Essex will receive \$400,000 over four academic years—2008-2012—to implement three strategies to improve student success for cohorts identified by our data as at-risk. These strategies were selected by our Core Team based on suggestions by faculty and staff, and will help to fulfill our Student Success goals that match goals of the Achieving the Dream initiative.

Goals of Achieving the Dream 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 strategies to improve success for these at-risk cohorts, to be supported by Achieving the Dream

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, to be pursued in the NECC Academic Master Plan

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

(over)

Strategy Teams

Strategy teams have been set up to implement each of the three strategies to improve cohort success over the next four years. Each of the strategy teams has a work plan and a plan for evaluation that informs any changes in resources or implementation over the course of the initiative and beyond. Below are the team updates for Spring 2009.



The Strategy Team for Student Success in Mathematics—led by Angela Guarino

- The new college level math lab will be ready to serve students on January 20th. The Center is fully furnished and equipped with student computers and My Math Test tutorial software. Staffing from a combination of resources will include: a 30 hour weekly coordinator and a team of peer and professional tutors. A “Grand Opening” celebration for the new Math Center is planned for early February.
- A computer based tutoring tracking system has been developed to monitor tutoring activities and to evaluate the efficacy of services. The system will be implemented at the start of the semester.
- Nancy Nickerson has developed an alternative instructional delivery model which will provide individualized instruction for students. Approximately 10 students will be enrolled in the system for the spring semester.
- Pilot tutorials were offered during the intercession to prepare students for the transition from developmental to college level Algebra, using the My Math Test web based system. Faculty members are currently working on editing the diagnostic skills assessments within My Math Tutorials to more closely reflect the curriculum. Plans for the spring and summer include the expansion of the tutorials to serve up to 100 students and additional Math courses.
- The ATD Math Team is collaborating with the Step Up Program to pilot a model for Supplemental Education, which will run in the spring semester and has enrolled 23 to date. Student leaders and the SI instructor will maintain logs and journals to help guide the design of the ATD Supplemental Instruction course next fall. Evaluation will also be conducted through student surveys and other mechanisms for feedback.
- Math related professional development resources are currently being developed in collaboration with the Math Retention Committee, including workshops for faculty regarding the integration of instruction for using the graphing calculator. Other workshops may include the integration of study skills and college survival skills across the math curriculum.

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

The team is currently

- Reviewing and revising policies affecting student advising
- Reviewing and revising placement cut-off scores
- Developing specific strategies to improve success for targeted student populations
- Developing an “e-Portfolio” system with Jeff Bickford, CIO, who will be doing a presentation to faculty/staff at convocation

The team has already

- Created an advising “road map” to be used by all advisors. CPAC advisors have been trained, and faculty will be trained in the advising system after Convocation.
- Created an “early alert” system that was piloted successfully in fall 2008.
- Significantly expanded online advising services to include four faculty members and the Center for Alternative Adult and Alternative Studies. There are plans for additional departments to go online.

A third Strategy Team for Enhancing the First Year Experience led by Karen Mitchell is charged with

- Evaluating and improving NECC’s College Success course
- Integrating the elements of this course into other courses and workshops for new students
- Devising a plan for the professional development of faculty and staff in the use of learning styles tools and teaching strategies for the millennial and bilingual 1.5 generation.
- Creating learning communities for developmental students

This strategy team will begin its work in the 2009-2010 academic year.

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

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