

Achieving the Dream Report Series



November 30, 2007--- Revised April 5, 2011

The Effect of Gender on Course Completion Rates for Developmental and Gatekeeper Courses

The Achieving the Dream initiative has afforded Northern Essex Community College the opportunity to increase student success. In the Fall of 2007, a Data Team was created to extensively review existing data and identify NECC's strengths as well as areas in need of improvement where it will be important for the college to focus resources. Three cohorts were established for the initial data review. The cohorts were comprised of first-time to NECC, degree-seeking students enrolled in the Fall of 2004, 2005 or 2006. This report is the first in a series which will highlight pertinent findings of the Data Team.

Through analysis of Fall 2006 course and grade data, it became clear that gender significantly effects successful completion in developmental and gatekeeper courses. "Success" is defined as course completion with a grade of C or better (for the purposes of this analysis, C- is excluded). The attached graphs and tables present examples of how female students at NECC are generally more successful than male students in completing developmental and gatekeeper courses.

The largest gender disparity in a developmental course was Basic Writing (WRT010) where the

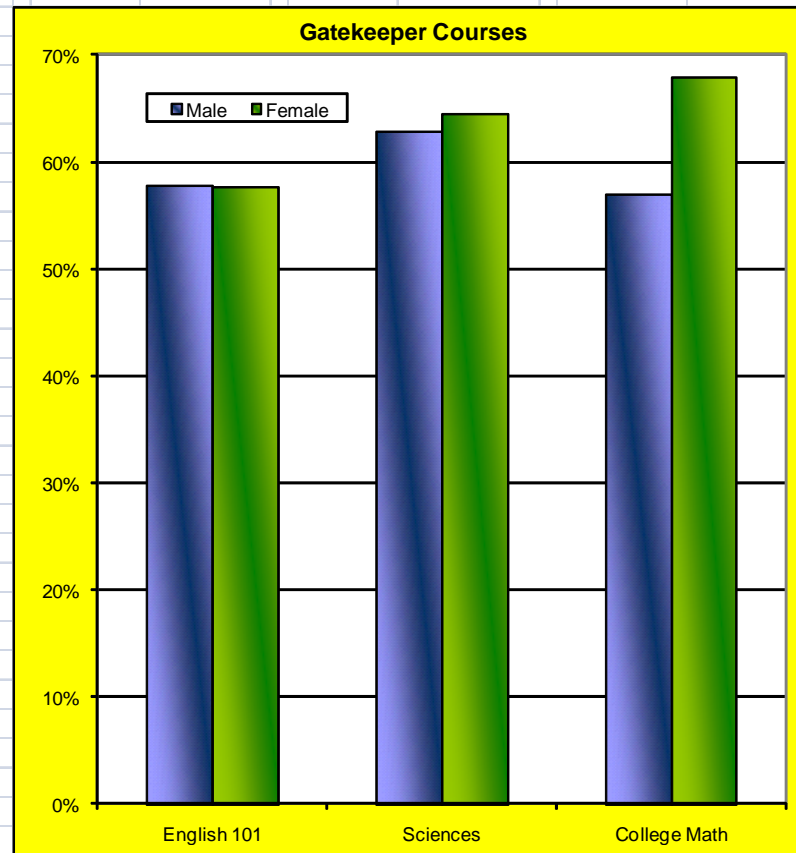
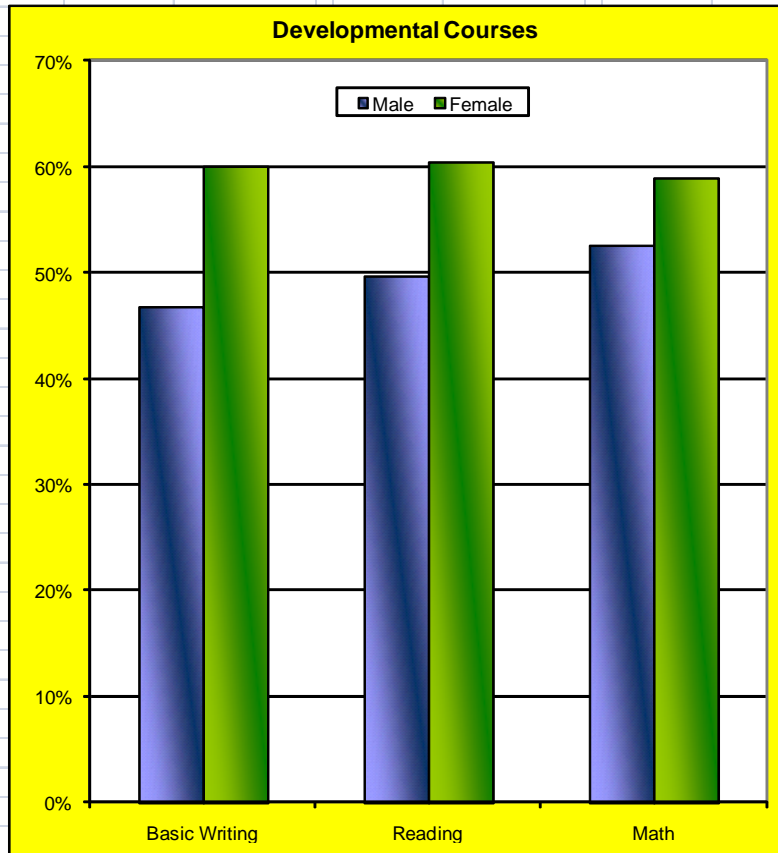
female completion rate was 13% higher than the male completion rate. In the other developmental course areas, the variations were not as large with an 10% higher rate for females in Reading (REA011, REA021) and a 6% higher completion rate for females in Math (MAT010, MAT021, MAT022).

The differences when looking at gatekeeper course completion rates are more diverse. English Comp. 1 (ENG101) shows equal completion rates between genders (58%). College-level Math (all 100 and 200 level courses) indicates an 11% higher completion rate among female students, while in the Natural Sciences (BIO, CHM, ERS, PHS, SCI) females achieved a rate 4% above their male counterparts.

Interpretations of these findings as well as suggestions for further analysis are always welcome. Please direct questions and comments to Thomas Fallon, Dean of Institutional Research and Planning, via phone at 978-556-3866 or email at tfallon@necc.mass.edu.



Course Completion Rates by Gender
Fall 2006



	Basic Writing		Reading		Math		English 101		Sciences		College Math	
	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete
Male	175	47%	179	50%	445	53%	436	58%	506	63%	396	57%
Female	220	60%	331	60%	724	59%	560	58%	1,189	65%	412	68%