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An Examination of Support Structures to Encourage Persistence through Graduation at Central Maine Community College

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**An Examination of Support Structures to Encourage
Persistence through Graduation at Central Maine
Community College**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

MASTER'S DEGREE IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES

By

Sonya G. Sampson

April 2014

FINAL APPROVAL FORM

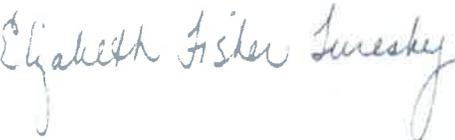
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
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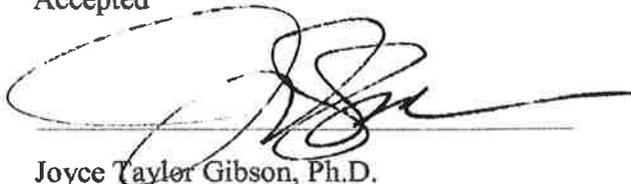
We hereby recommend that the thesis of Sonya Sampson entitled *An Examination of Support Structures to Encourage Persistence through Graduation at Central Maine Community College* be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master in Leadership Studies.

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Accepted



Joyce Taylor Gibson, Ph.D.
Dean, Lewiston-Auburn College

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No one truly walks their life path alone. While one's journey certainly has private moments, there are people who come along beside you that support, encourage and pull from you your very best, and while some may only share a portion of your journey, they impact your life forever. I am blessed to have several people in my life that have done just that.

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Abstract

Central Maine Community College (CMCC) services Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford counties. Enrollment for CMCC has grown impressively over the last eleven years, since transitioning from a Technical College. While enrollment has increased, retaining students through graduation (persistence) is still an area of concern, particularly because its service area still has some of the lowest percentages of adults with college credentials in Maine.

The goal for this research is to identify and evaluate both student need, as it applies to retention, and existing support structures of the CMCC community with the objective of developing a model of best practices to increase the persistence¹ rate for students desiring a two-year associates degree at Central Maine Community College. The hypothesis is that when best practice support structures are in place, more students will persist to graduation.

¹ For clarity, persistence, for this research, is the desire and ability of a student to stay at college as a candidate for a degree, and to meet that goal in a time frame that takes no more than 150% of the time allotted for a degree. In other words, for a two-year degree for someone going full-time it might take up to 3 years to accomplish or finish the degree requirements.

Introduction

Even after several years of continuous responsiveness, Maine still has one of the lowest percentages of people who have obtained college degrees in the nation. Today, according to the website for Compact for Higher Education only 37% of Maine adults, ages 25-64, hold college degrees (The Maine Compact, 2014). The numbers have improved over the last few years but Maine is still lagging behind the other New England states, which the same report claims, have an average 47 percent of working adults who hold college credentials (The Maine Compact, 2014).

Maine's rural environment, seemingly, adds to the barriers that many of its citizens must breach to become well educated. Unfortunately, several rural Maine counties can only boast of between 26 to 33 per cent of its citizens holding college degrees; of special interest to this researcher are the counties in which Central Maine Community College serves. They are: Androscoggin County in which only 30.76 percent of adults hold a certificate or degree, Oxford County with only 28.02 percent and Franklin County with 34.87 percent (A stronger Maine through higher education, 2013). It is not inconsequential that we find the areas least educated also have the lowest per capita income (The Maine Compact, 2014). This disparity between an educated work force and those who are not becomes obvious in several sectors including: job attainment, business growth in a community and earning capacity, all ultimately affecting total tax base and the higher community good (Barnett, 2011).

Additional pressure for economic growth is increasing; a prophetic view into new jobs of the future, by The Maine Compact for Higher Education (2014), has determined that by 2018, of

all jobs created here in Maine, 59% will require a higher level of knowledge, skills and competencies derived only from a college educated work force.

In an effort to enhance Maine's work population and develop a skilled work force to entice new businesses to Maine, the Maine State Legislature has tasked the Maine Community College System (MCCS) with providing its citizens with affordable, accessible education. The MCCS website states, "The primary goals of the Maine community College System are to create an educated, skilled and adaptable labor force which is responsive to the changing needs of the economy of the State and to promote local, regional and statewide economic development" (MCCS Guiding Principles).

To this end, Central Maine Community College (CMCC), along with its sister colleges throughout Maine have been striving to meet the needs of a diverse student population and have had several years of increased enrollment of matriculated students, a highlight which benchmarks their successful endeavors. Since the community colleges transitioned from their mostly technical role in 2003 to the associate degree awarding community college system, enrollment has grown 80% (MCCS, Facts at a Glance).

While the story of the community colleges is widely praised, and for good reason, statistics show that there are still a high number of students who become matriculated (accepted and enrolled into a college or university as a candidate for a degree) in a program of choice but do not finish a two-year associate's degree. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the graduation rate for Maine's public two-year colleges and CMCC specifically is at about 25 percent (CMCC Factbook, fall 2013). While the graduation numbers for two year public institutions, in Maine, are down from the 40 percent cited in 2002, most of

this change is attributed to the transfer mission which the community college has recently undertaken, in cooperation with the University of Maine system, to move students from a two-year associates degree to a four-year bachelor's degree with minimal loss of transfer credit (Maine Community College System, 2014). In other words, students may begin their academic journey at a community college but before they meet all the requirements for the associates degree they transition or transfer to the University (or other college) as a candidate for a bachelor's degree.

In 2009, 17% of community colleges full-time students transferred from the community colleges before completing a degree. This is great news for students in helping meet their academic goals; however, the high number of transfers adversely affects the graduation or completion rate for the community colleges (MCCS, 2014).

While there is reason to celebrate, one must pause and consider what has kept the other, almost 60 percent of community college students, from reaching their goal of graduating with a degree or credential? What obstacles have potential graduates encountered that have cut short their journey?

With so few Mainers seeking academic credentials at the college level, it is imperative that community colleges determine what roadblocks are hindering the individual's journey and identify what support services are needed to help a student persist toward the goal of graduation.

Byrd and Macdonald (2005) suggest that while education is a necessity, for nontraditional² and high-risk³ students access is not assured (p.22). Community colleges play an important role in helping this demographic with education attainment. Bloom, LeBlanc, Paxon, Rouse and Sommo (2008) liken community colleges to Ellis Island, writing, “they [community colleges] provide a pathway into middle class for many low income individuals, including people of color, immigrants, full-and part time workers, and students who are the first in their families to attend college” (p. ix). This is certainly an appropriate metaphor for Central Maine Community College. The college is tasked to meet a variety of needs from a diverse population. Many of these students come with history that negatively impacts their academic journey. It is these students, the ones who are seemingly programmed to fail that need the additional supports to persist to graduation. Let me characterize what a high-risk student at the community college might look like. According to Schreiner, Noel, Anderson and Cantwell (2011), at risk students might fall into one or more of these categories. They may: be a first-generation college attendee, come from a low socio economic background, be academically un- or under prepared⁴, have a lackluster prior school performance, or be part of a minority group entering a primarily white institute (p. 321).

² The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) recognizes seven characteristics common to nontraditional students: They do not immediately continue their education after graduating from high school; they attend college part-time; they work full-time (35 hours or more per week); they are financially independent; they have children or dependents other than the spouse; they are a single parent; they hold a GED, not a high school diploma (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

³ High-risk is a term used for students, who through life circumstances, are statistically more likely than others to fail academically (Arnold, 1999).

⁴ Academically prepared indicates a student has taken and successfully completed high school coursework considered crucial in preparation for student participation at the post-secondary level. These courses include levels of: math, science, and foreign language (Goldrick-Rab, 2010, p. 451).

Any one of these characteristics might contribute to academic failure and/or early departure from college, having more than one of these characteristics contributes to higher probability of failure. One thing to keep in mind though, the term “high risk or at risk”, while helpful in identifying those who might need extra attention, must not be used to infer *disability*. Goldrick-Rab (2010) reminds us that all high risk attributes must be viewed as existing on a continuum, which students may or may not respond to (p. 451). The old prescription, “one is known by the company they keep”, should be avoided as applied to high risk conditions. Each risk must be assessed individually and not conferred on a student as a matter of expediency or appointment.

Conversely, colleges may develop constructs, based on family conditions, concerning a student’s *perceived* readiness for college which may preclude a needy student with seemingly no “high risk attributes from getting the support the student needs. Byrd and Macdonald (2005) acknowledge that colleges often, mistakenly, assume that students from higher socioeconomic families or those students whose parents have gone to college or students who have done well in high school understand the perplexities of getting ready for college and then pursuing that dream (p.30). This is not necessarily the case. Byrd and Macdonald’s research suggests that individual experiences are so distinct that each learner must be evaluated singularly in order to provide the best support strategy for their personal needs (p.30). So while this research focuses mainly on high risk students, there is a warning within the writing to be liberal when identifying those who may have need. To that end, it is this researcher’s goal to 1) determine what factors students face that may affect student persistence 2) examine existing support structures available to students at CMCC and learn how they are currently utilized 3) review

and evaluate practices at other postsecondary institutions which provide structured support for student retention and persistence 4) identify a model of best (or appropriate) practices that might increase retention efforts at CMCC which should, ultimately, increase graduation rates. 5) Determine what leadership qualities are needed within CMCC to bring about the needed changes.

Literature Review

The focus for the literature review seemed to naturally fall into three subject areas which affect student persistence at the postsecondary level of education, they are:

1) Environmental influences-factors which originate from the student's milieu: family, traditions, stressors, or obligations. 2) Economic Influences – factors which come from financial responsibilities or needs. 3) Institutional influences – factors which come from the student's interaction with educational facilities.

Factors which might affect CMCC student persistence:

Environmental influences

One's history often encumbers one's future. Family background, culture and socio-economic factors all play into environmental influences on persistence. Braxton (2000) states that these type of family influences are reliable indicators of "status attainment, educational intentions, and success in college even when later experiences and behaviors are taken into account" (p.178). In other words, you learn what you live.

Environmental or cultural influences have a distinct impact on student decisions and thus in persistence at the college level. Colleges are challenged at many levels to meet the needs of a diverse student population; CMCC is no different. As Southerland (2006) reminds us,

today's students are not represented by one genre. They are differentiated by, cultural differences, age, economic disparities, academic goals, and a wide range of academic abilities (p.2). This cocktail of diversity adds layers of complexity to an already stretched resource pool and makes it hard for colleges to address all the nuanced needs of their students.

Family obligations often require students to pop in and out of college - taking classes as time and limitations allow them. For some, this is the only way they will reach their academic goals. One easily recognizes family and work obligations as mitigating circumstances instigating these behaviors, and they do, however, there are many other non-academic factors which also influence a student's decision to stop out⁵ or drop out of college (ACT, 2007). These factors often hinge on psychosocial influences such as: student motivation, one's ability to self-regulate, one's academic self-confidence, communication skills, and goal striving characteristics, all hard qualities to appraise and mediate at a cursory level. These students also often score low on social integration making the transition to college both academically and culturally challenging (Arnold, 1999).

While the United States has a diverse and accessible post-secondary education system, one still finds inequities in this system which contribute to "the perpetuation of socioeconomic stratification in American society" (Lohfink and Paulsen, 2005, p. 409). The authors propose that first generation college students are disproportionately overrepresented in sub groups of disadvantaged college goers, which groups are classified by: low socioeconomic status (SES), racial/cultural bias, and substandard pre-college experience, all of which are cast as high-risk attributes for college students.

⁵ Stop out refers to students who leave college and return at a later date.

First generation students have no immediate family member to resource for historical data relating to the college experience. This lack of cultural capital can lead to a deep sense of frustration, stemming from their inability to maneuver or understand an often chaotic path through admissions, financial aid, and registration of coursework, as well not having someone at home to commiserate with that understands the “ropes” of getting into and then succeeding at college.

Hossler, Ziskin, Moore, and Wakhungu (2008) suggest the strongest predictor for retaining students in college is family encouragement and support (p.12). Yet it may be hard to express encouragement for something often perceived as not valuable or essential, consequently, a lack of family support can become a barrier for students and may result in the student dropping out of college to pursue other opportunities.

Students from disadvantaged families often find negotiating within the social and academic college experience difficult. Having no context in which to filter their choices, they often pick unproductive options in regard to program of study or course selection (Goldrick-Rab, 2010, p. 453). As we learn more of the importance of family encouragement, it is vital for colleges to revise their policies to include *family orientations* in which the college can offer the family support in helping them understand college policies and practices as well as introducing them to school resources and experiences that their student will encounter (Hossler, et al, 2008, p. 19).

Interestingly, when parents of students have higher levels of education, research suggests that parents are much more likely to give high levels of encouragement for college attendance to their children (Braxton, 2000, p. 178). This encouragement, Braxton affirms, is

strongly associated with a student's intention (motivation) to attend college and persist toward a degree (p. 178). The dichotomy of the two situations is stark. One can imagine how a student, wanting to go to college, might feel torn when parents insist the best course of action is for the student to begin a "good job" right out of high school, especially if the family is in financial need. Byrd and Macdonald (2005) confirm that family dynamics are often the deciding factor for college decisions, especially when there is a disagreement on when a student should start college (p. 30).

Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) agree and add that choices made by families are based on complex worldviews that may be unique within their own culture group. These principal references often frame how students view college and its importance in their life (p. 419). As an example, if a family feels strongly that a female should stay in the family home until she is married, this view may affect college choice (Is it close to home so that she can stay connected to her family life?) or program choice (Does the program encourage her to stay in traditional roles for women so that she remains within their "cultural norms"? or Will they encourage her to drop out of college should she become engaged to be married because that may produce higher cultural capital for the family than an education might?).

On the other side of the coin, there are many U.S. high school students who carry a sense of educational entitlement. ACT (2007) reports "U.S. primary and secondary school students spend less time studying than do their counterparts in other industrialized countries, but are more satisfied with their academic achievement"(p.1). The report goes on to state that students believe all through primary and secondary school that they will go on to earn

bachelor's degree yet do not take the rigorous courses in high school that act as foundational preparation for college coursework (ACT, 2007).

These types of cultural pressures are very real and have real consequences on preferences, but ultimately the environmental factors that influence *persistence* which means the student has made the decision to get into a program, are: the student's intent to persist, institutional and student commitment, college grades, high school academic experience and social and academic integration (Arnold, 1999, p.1). While colleges do not have much sway in a student's culture and traditions there may be ways to utilize these variables to help meet personal and scholastic goals if the college administration pursue awareness of relevant cultural information they may be able to offer opportunities to create social support with new friends and faculty at the college. Intentional programs help increase student involvement whereby students feel their presence and actions are valued in the campus community and foster a sense of belonging.

Factors which might affect CMCC student persistence

Economic influences

Economic factors cannot be underestimated as they pertain to persistence. Financial pressures for both traditional and nontraditional students often force their hand in the decision to stay the course in college or drop out and find work that will sustain their family life.

According to McKinney and Novak (2012), in the 07-08 academic year only 58% of community college students who were eligible to receive Pell grant funding actually filed a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) (p.63). The FAFSA form is not only used by the federal government to assign aid (including: grants, loans, or work-study monies) but is also

used by most states and postsecondary institutions to assign need-based financial aid.

According to McKinney and Novak (2012), community college students are exactly the type of students which federal aid was created for. Approximately 40 percent of the student body who attend community colleges meet the guidelines for grant money and have no other resources to pay for a college education (p. 64). In other words, those not filing a FAFSA are missing the opportunity to help lower the total cost of attending college and the authors suggest that filing a FAFSA has direct correlation with higher persistence rates among lower income students. In fact, the numbers are not insignificant, McKinney and Novak (2012) write, "Among Pell-grant-eligible students, those who filed a FAFSA had 122% higher odds of persisting from fall to spring semesters than their peers who did not file" (p.67). With these odds, support at a community college must contain financial hand-holding to include step-by-step instructions, if needed, in filing a FAFSA.

The service area for Central Maine Community College incorporates some of the lowest household incomes in Maine. The average yearly income for students at CMCC is \$32,570; with the median income at \$22,870 (Office of Planning and Public Affairs, 2014). As one can imagine, at this level of income, there are many students who require significant financial support if they are to attend and complete college. Goldrick-Rab (2010) speaks to the inequality of information that is given to disadvantaged students in getting information about financial resources. She writes, " Knowledge of how to pay for college is concentrated in families where at least one parent attended higher education: (p. 452). First – generation students are less likely to receive high quality information about financial aid opportunities and in turn are less like to apply to college or file the federal application. Determining how one is going to pay for college and live

one's current lifestyle gives most students pause. The inability to pay for college is a formidable impediment to access, persistence and degree attainment (McKinney and Novak, 2012, p. 63). Thankfully, financial aid is available to qualified students, this helps relieve some of the financial pressures invoked by going to college. When students apply to CMCC they are encouraged to file a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. The FAFSA has been labeled as a critical gatekeeper for most financial aid because most institutions require a student to file a FAFSA form before they will consider a student for *any type* of financial support/aid (McKinney and Novak, 2012, p. 64).

Last year, at CMCC, 84.5% of matriculated full-time/first-time students received financial aid; 69% of students received federal grants which will not have to be paid back (Office of Planning and Public Affairs, 2014). This is a huge part of retention strategy, for Pell-grant eligible students who file a FAFSA have higher odds of persisting from fall to spring semesters than peers who do not file (McKinney and Novak, 2012, p. 67) and furthermore Porter (1990), claims that students who receive grant aid any time in their first year are more likely to have continuous enrollment into their second year (p. 4). Financial aid makes a huge difference for students; the lack of it, especially in grant money for those in a low socio-economic class, has long-term detrimental effects on a student's ability to persist (Porter, 1990, p. 5).

While the FAFSA is a free application, there is often a stigma placed on it. Anecdotally, in this researcher's early years I worked in the financial aid office. Parents/and or students often resisted filing their FAFSA because they seemed to think filing somehow indicated that they were poor and not able to contribute to their child's college experience, there seemed to be a sense of shame. Often, parents resist helping the student file or resist giving them tax

information so they may file because they mistakenly think it would impute a financial obligation to the parents. Educating both parents and students about the process and the benefits of FAFSA must happen at the introduction to a college so that students can take advantage of the financial help available, which ultimately has a positive effect on persistence decisions (Lohfink and Paulsen, 2005, p.419).

Goldrick-Rab (2010) exposes another flaw in Federal Financial Aid as it pertains to students. The rules and guidelines that govern how aid is distributed make it hard for students to access and keep financial aid. For example, part-time enrollment may reflect a student's need to make money while going to school, however, if a student only enrolls part-time (6 credits or less) in college, aid is reduced remarkably, further exasperating the need for a student to work (p. 444).

Taking enough credits to get through and graduate from a program in two years causes another financial aid concern. Currently, the federal Pell Grant program (and most state aid programs) caps student aid at 12 credits per term. In other words for federal aid purposes 12 credits is full time. If students wish to take the other three credits necessary to stay within the confines of their program and finish within the recommend two-years, the student needs to find a way to pay for it out of pocket (Mangan, 2013). This fault, in the way federal aid is calculated, adds unfair pressure on students, often causing them to only take classes which they can get financial aid for, stretching out the two-year program another six months to a year.

McKinney and Novak (2012) recognize two other financial conditions, which tend to draw a student away from college studies, and may hinder their progress toward graduation.

The first of these is the necessity of a student to work more than 20 hours a week to meet their financial obligations. Research suggests that this practice has a negative impact on a student's ability to complete a college degree (Lohfink and Paulsen, 2005, McKinney and Novak, 2012). Yet most full time students work on average 25 hours a week (Arnold, 1999, p. 13). Students who need to work more than 20 hours a week often suffer from lack of time to do their studies. For each course credit taken at the college level (and most courses are 3 or 4 credits), it is recommended that a student complete two to three hours of outside class work (CMCC, Determination of Academic Credit). This adds an additional ten to fifteen hours per week, per class, to keep up with the academic demands of college. If a student is taking between twelve to fifteen credits this is an additional 30- 45 hours of study time *required* to maintain academic stature. Research shows non persisting students work more hours while attending college than those who completed their education (Arnold, 1999, p. 13). Research also suggests that students who maintain 20 hours or less of work are able to benefit from tutoring and supplemental instruction, as well as take advantage of opportunities for practicum or internships which build practical skills impacting future employability (McKinney and Novak, 2012, p.69).

The second factor pertains to those students who have dependent children (or family members). Older, nontraditional students who have dependent children are often drawn away from their studies to meet the demands of active children: sickness, school needs, and other caretaking responsibilities (McKinney and Novak, 2012, p. 70). In fact, students often cite life circumstances as the blame for attrition rather than school-related problems (Arnold, 99, p. 9). Family obligations have real consequences for a student trying to complete a degree (McKinney

and Novak, 2012). For example: many courses have attendance requirements that impact grades over and above how the coursework is completed (example: If a student misses 4 or more classes their grade will drop a full grade). If one's grade is hovering at a C and the student must miss one more classes to take someone to the doctor's, pick up a child, etc. the student may decide to drop the course rather than take the lower grade (which will not transfer and may not count toward a specific program requirement). This is problematic for two reasons: 1- Depending on the percentage of the course completed, the student may have to pay for the full tuition of the course without gaining any college credit. If he/she received federal aid for the class this may have to be recalculated, in essence causing them to lose financial aid and incurring a financial debt to the college, 2- There is a point in the semester which dictates when a student receives an "F" grade should he/she withdraw. This has a direct impact on the student's GPA and a student's GPA is directly related to retention efforts (Oja, 2012).

Factors which might affect CMCC student persistence

Institutional influences

While environmental issues place constraints upon students, Hossler et al (2008) admonish, that the retention literature, to date, has focused too much attention on the student's individual characteristics and behaviors. While important, Hossler suggests that this narrow focus has left institutions misdirecting their energies on trying to change the student's behaviors instead of changing their own. (p. 4) He goes on to suggest that students do not have to be defined by their demography. With mindful institutional policies and practices in place an institute can stimulate and guide a student's journey through college (especially the first year) and help them to learn behaviors which will allow them to overcome environmental/cultural

disposition. Institutions need to learn to appreciate factors that lead to attrition; these factors generally work in tandem, not in isolation, to produce negative results. Hossler et al (2008) give a clarion call to colleges, especially community colleges; students are shaped by institutional praxis and policies. This being the case, those should be well vetted and supported by research, which has not often been the practice (p. 4). Rob Risley, executive director of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for community college students, reiterates the same message in his 2012 commencement address at Atlantic Cape Community College. He goes on to advocate for a “sea of change” in the philosophy at community colleges. He resolved that a new culture, a “culture of completion”, must be embraced by all stakeholders in this great American venture. He called on presidents, trustees, faculty, staff, administrators, students, corporate and community leaders to assess their individual and collective roles in supporting completion for each student (Risley, 2013).

A Breakthrough Model of Best Practices

What policies and practices represent the most promising areas for reform? Academic watchdogs have been critical concerning the lack of adequate research data behind community college practices in dealing with retention (Chen, 2011, Goldrick-Rab, 2010, Hossler, 2008, and Berger and Braxton, 1998). Unfortunately, much of the best evidence on potential reforms is new and scarce writes Goldrick-Rab (2010). The writer goes as far to say, until recently, studies purporting a set of best practices had really only listed a set of suggested conclusions which had no rigorous research behind it to defend it (p. 454). That may be true, however, Noel-Levitz, a trusted partner with higher education, has been working for over twenty years with colleges to produce surveys and analyze the data that comes in. In the last ten years, the outcry for

guidance from community colleges has produced new research undertaken by some well-known academic supporters including, Noel Levitz, the Washington Education Foundation (WEF) a recognized leader in supporting higher education outcomes, and the Center for Community College Student Engagement. The outcomes of this latest research have been assembled and were just released in a 2013 report entitled, “*A Matter of Degrees; High-Impact Practices for Community College Student Engagement*” (Center for Community College Student Engagement [known as: CCCSE], 2013) and has created real interest for academics at the community colleges. This well-funded project focused on identifying and promoting high-impact educational practices in community colleges and derives huge support from both the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation, philanthropies who have made it their goal to build support for college students. One of the key components of the project is the magnitude and breadth of the research completed. According to Hossler (2008), many college policies and practices have lacked true research support to determine how they affect student persistence (p.4). The extant data coming from the CCCSE report, and the statistics supporting it, are the most encompassing to date to target, specifically, community colleges and practices which will support successful completion of a degree for community colleges students (www.ccsse.org).

From this research, thirteen promising practices evolved which, when incorporated, show an improvement in student’s success and persistence toward a degree. These *High-Impact* practices represent the ideal, an approach to student engagement which has been established as successful pathways for student success to reach their academic ambitions.

While the term “high impact” seems to be the new buzz word, Braxton (2008) defined

several of these interventions in earlier research that would help countermand environmental oppressions that disadvantaged students faced. (p. 24). Debra David, Project Director for the regional partnership between university and community colleges, at California State defines high impact practices as those, “characterized by high [student] effort, quality interactions between faculty and students and contextualized, real-world settings that illustrate the relevance of college learning” (David, 2011, p. 2). She, in essence, has hit upon what most of the high impact practices encompass, and what makes them so successful - student engagement.

CCCSE highlights student engagement as the key to unlocking the door to education attainment. Hu (2011) agrees. While students come to college with different backgrounds and different ability, research shows that *if* the college can capture the student’s imagination and entice them through content and relationships to explore the material being taught at a deep level, both in and out of the classroom, that this engagement can facilitate learning and encourage the student toward the end goal of graduating (p.97). This new focus on engagement is a fairly new concept in research for the community colleges. In the 2013 CCCSE report, all practices listed were funneled through the lens of student engagement because of the high relationship to student success (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2013). What has also been revealed is that each institute, like CMCC, must evaluate their own culture and procedures to determine if any of these elements could prove valuable to their student’s success. A one size fits all mentality fits no institute well. The impact of these practices will depend on how they are implemented and how the students personally experience and respond to each practice.

High impact practices shown to improve student outcomes through institutional practice

Assessment and Placement

Bettinger and Long (2006) suggest the assessment test has become the key academic gate-keeper for colleges (p. 1). As we have seen, students come to college through many different academic pathways. It is imperative that their *current ability* be assessed to assure that students are placed in courses that will build their knowledge base and increase their skill level. This, according to the CCCSE report, should be a multi-step process, not the one time snap shot that it has become. The recommendation from the CCCSE report is that colleges provide an opportunity for students to participate in a review of material that will be covered on entrance or placement exams to minimize the amount of remediation necessary for each student (CCCSE, 2013, p.26). Once assessed, students who need remediation should be placed into coursework that allows them to succeed.

Student Orientation

Student Orientation provides an excellent pathway to help new college goers understand the college's expectations for students; understand their own role in becoming successful as a student; and the roles of others at the college. There is some debate on whether orientation should be mandatory or not and whether or not an online version of orientation can provide the needed information for students to feel prepared to come to campus their first day; individual college culture and preference must decide.

What we do know is that there is a positive correlation between those who have gone through orientation and how supported a student feels, as a learner at the institute when they

participate in the orientation process (CSSSE, 2013, p. 10). This is an important find, as Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum (2003) recognize hidden prerequisites and unknown social skills as obstacles for disadvantaged students (p.121). Orientation can provide the structure needed to help students gain some cultural capital that will help them maneuver through uncharted territory and attain their goals.

Parent Orientation

While nothing in the CCCSE report indicates that an institute should incorporate a parent orientation; this researcher is convinced that the need for parental support is integral to student success and therefore that orientation should be available to every parent or interested family member, who wishes to attend, especially of first generation college goers (Hossler, et al, 2008). A parental orientation would help parents affirm their parental student support and give the parent access to knowledge of important policies and procedures that the student will be responsible to understand and maintain. This empowering process could do a lot to increase parent encouragement for student persistence.

Academic Goal Setting and Planning

Barnett (2011) has done intensive research on student validation and how a person's sense of integration into an institution is directly linked to their desire to stay (p. 196). Student validation promotes feelings of self-worth and instills a belief that the student has the ability to succeed in the college setting. How does an institution engender these feelings of validation for a student? Barnett encourages advisors, faculty and staff to look for ways to demonstrate recognition of a student, intentionally show respect and appreciation for students, their diversity and their community in and out of class (2011, p. 196). Cates and Schaeffle (2011) go a

bit further. While most of their work focused on pre-college attributes, they go into detail about the need to develop a student's expectations and goals for college (p. 323). With so many students coming into the community college under prepared from high school, it appears that part of the advising strategy must be to help the student create a goal plan that preferably includes all aspects of the academic journey. For example, if a student must take remedial coursework, make that a goal for the first semester (or two, if needed). Inquire about future academic or work plans and delve into his/her motivation toward a college education. Cates and Schaeffle (2011) found that most high school students who make an educational plan develop a stick-to-it-ness and follow through with the plan (p. 323). Consequently, college plans are imperative for new students and the opportunity to create one with an advisor allows for relationship building and interacting which is also part of the equation for students to stay engaged (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2013).

In an effort to provide another tool for advisors in meeting this need, a two-year course schedule might be beneficial. With two years' worth of coursework posted a student is able to track classes they will need over the two academic years; it allows them to proactively engage in choosing the classes; it allows them to set goals and plan for the future, resulting in less course withdrawal, all of which validate the student through positive interaction (Mangan, 2013).

Intrusive Advising:

Another education factor, which fosters persistence, surrounds quality academic advising/support (Hossler, et al, 2008). Hossler makes it clear that from the time students' step onto the campus until they graduate, they need to feel supported in their academic efforts,

and this is especially true with at-risk students (p. 14). Intrusive or proactive advising meets that need and can be initiated upon the first contact with the student.

This intentional form of guidance began in the 1970's with the novel idea that advising and counseling be combined and given to students before they even realized their need. The *trained* advisor provides students with deliberate mediation to enhance student engagement; serves as a mentor showing interest and involvement with the individual student; gives intensive advising, designed to educate the student concerning available options; and approaches the student before problems developed (Varney, 2012). Zane State College, a pilot school for study, provides a great role model for intrusive advising. Intrusive advising is part of their core philosophy and is incorporated throughout the whole college. The Zane initiative is called "Personal Touch" and is based on: Respect, Responsibility, and Responsiveness. Because it is embedded into all areas of the college each student will get to experience the ideal and belief that they have all the tools necessary to embrace student life at their college (CCCSE, 2013, p.9).

CCCSE (2013) maintains that intrusive advising fosters early interpersonal connections, engaged learning, and provides the necessary academic and social support needed for incoming students to become successful (p. 8).

Accelerated or Fast-track Developmental Education

"Remediation is a poor substitution for preparation", declares Kraman, D'Amico, and Williams (2006, p.3). A valid point, yet analyses of student preparation coming from high school reveal many incoming freshman students have not attained the basic core skills of good study habits or the ability to comprehend and manage complicated material, making remedial help at

the college level a necessity (Kraman, 2007). In 2004, The National Center for Education Statistics reported 42 percent of first-year community college freshman, required at least one remedial course (NCES 2004). The news is more dismal closer to home, the MCCS reported in their annual remediation report to the Legislature (Full letter is on their website.) dated January 1, 2014, that 52.2% of students who graduated, in June 2012, from a Maine high school, GED or adult education program or were home schooled and became enrolled in the fall 2013 semester at a Maine community college required remedial courses (Maine Community College System, 2014).

There are several educational indicators which suggest traditional freshman students may find it hard to begin and complete a post-secondary degree, but the leading indicator for future college distress is the student's high school academic experience (Arnold, 99, p.1). Yet there is conflicting research on whether remedial course work actually plays a role in persistence, according to McKinney and Novak (2012). Some researchers believe successful completion of remedial work indicates higher persistence rates for community college students, others indicate that remedial coursework only adds another layer of complexity to student progress and discourages students from continuing on toward completion (p.1).

What is a community college to do? Their mission is to educate all students, no matter their level of preparedness; so with bare minimum requirements, one may be accepted into the community college experience. This being the case, the college must offer classes which will help build skills for students to become successful in the college level coursework and begin at a level where students can be successful. Smith (2010) is adamant that remedial coursework be offered and sees remedial work as part of the equity equation. Many students from low

income families or underfunded high schools would never be able to overcome such shortages without the help of colleges teaching basic skills curriculum. She intimates that remedial coursework not only opens access into college but it is often the gateway to future economic and professional success (Smith, 2010, p. 263). This leaves colleges in a precarious position. If they don't offer remedial help to incoming students, then there will be fewer students who are able to continue on toward a degree. If they do offer developmental coursework, precious resources are diverted to coursework that teaches at a pre-collegiate level.

While there is much written on the prevalence of under prepared students coming out of high school, one must not miscalculate that remediation is only for traditional high school students. Many nontraditional students go back to college for varied reasons and need remedial work. For those who have been out of high school for several years and wish to complete their education or be retrained in a new field, basic skills learned in high school have, often, been all but forgotten (Bettinger and Long, 2006). Remedial coursework often acts as a brush-up to reestablish basic concepts and offers the opportunity for students to learn a new set of skills such as creating study habits, learning to read critically and how to write with intention.

There are obviously deep seated issues at play here and while the Community College system's very mission leaves the door open to any student, no matter their preparation, the opportunity to go to college, one must wonder how a college can meet the needs of so many underprepared students.

The pedagogy used to teach remedial coursework is vast and beyond the scope of this research. However, one thing is clear, according to Boylan and Saxon's review of the Literature

on developmental education (2005), the leading indicator for successful student performance in developmental courses is for faculty to establish clear goals and objectives so that students understand the expectations for the coursework and then they will be able to accomplish the learning objectives for the coursework. Maximizing the benefits of remediation is essential.

The CCCSE (2013) recommendation is to create concurrent coursework encompassing both remedial and college-level coursework in English. By combining the two, the student avoids an additional semester of classwork lessening the time to degree completion and the additional expense of the remedial work. CCCSE reports accelerated learning pilot programs show a substantial 40% increase of successful completion for students taking the concurrent coursework as compared to those only taking developmental courses (p. 13). Students taking the full-college credit courses acknowledged feeling supported at a higher rate than those who did not share the experience.

First Year Experience

There are several educational attainments, which can positively or negatively impact student persistence at a particular college. One is student grade point average (GPA). According to Arnold (1999) a student who maintains a 2.0 GPA average (a grade of C) or better has a higher likelihood of staying at a particular institution (p.7). This, once again, highlights the need for triage for first year students. At risk students must be identified early on in the academic year so that preventative measures can be assigned to assist in successful completion. The first-year experience course can play a huge factor in helping a student learn the tools they need in order to thrive. Student success programs such as First year experience are designed to teach small cohorts of students the best ways to maneuver through college life.

The course generally places students in an environment that allows them to engage with each other and grow together as they build knowledge and skills essential for success in the college environment, such as, how to utilize student services and campus resources and time management and study skills. In many colleges, faculty teaching the first year experience course is also the student advisor for the first year. After taking the class, students generally demonstrate more positive relationships with faculty and staff as well as other students. CCCSE (2013) notes a higher benchmark score in support for learners from those who participated in First Year Experience than those who did not. Making connections and helping a student feel ready to meet academic challenges are all part of this student success model.

Learning Community

A Learning Community within the college context is a model of instruction where linked coursework is taught by themes in an integrative fashion. Cohorts of students take courses together designed to increase shared learning experiences, facilitate relationship building among faculty and students, and increase higher level thinking processes (Scrivener, et al., 2008). Brownell and Swaner (2009) support the use of learning communities as a way to transition underserved students into college. Their research suggests that a Learning Community atmosphere does much to build a student's identity as a learner (p.27). There are many models of Learning Communities to choose from. The most common are "linked" courses, such as College Composition and Biology. All the students in the cohort would be registered for both classes. In this type of learning environment the students might be assigned reading from the Biology text book and have to write a scientific paper on a theme in biology that would then be graded by both instructors. There are other more in-depth learning

communities where students share all courses within the semester and all are taught with a thematic approach by a team of teachers.

Research on learning communities, particularly for developmental classes; have been shown successful in supporting student learning, involvement and retention (Smith, 2010, p.263). Learning communities are valuable, not necessarily for the way courses are scheduled but because of the supportive pedagogies which support student learning (Smith, 2010, 281). Learning communities must be developed with intentionality. The goal should be to introduce student support to problematic, high risk of failure classes instead of devoting it to faculty interest.

CCCSE respondents who participated in a well-designed learning community had higher benchmark scores for several learning outcomes: increased active and collaborative learning, increased student-faculty interaction and support for learners. Under pilot conditions and after longitudinal analysis there was shown to be an increase of 36% in graduation for students who participated in a learning community (CCCSE, 2013, p.19).

Alert and Intervention

Berger and Braxton (1998) note the strong influence institutional policy can have on student integration into a college. The degree to which a student feels that the college is concerned for them has profound effect on their decisions to stay at the college or leave (p.105). An early warning system requires that the institution develop infrastructure that will allow instructors and other concerned officials to signal the advisors when students participate in potential risk behaviors, such as, poor class attendance, assignments not turned in on time or done poorly, and poor class participation. This type of warning system allows the advisor to

contact the student and let them experience the caring of the college and to develop a timely intervention plan, with the student, which gives them a sense of control and support.

Appropriate interventions for at risk students might include: mandatory first-semester advising; advising contact with all students below a 2.0 GPA; a recommendation of support services; and advisor consultation before withdrawal from a course is approved.

The CSSSE report shows the alert and intervention paradigm to be one of the most effective high impact practices of all those reported (CCSE, 2013, p. 32).

Experiential Learning- Beyond the Classroom

Capstones, intern/externships, study abroad, and service learning all create opportunities for students to gain learning experiences outside the classroom. Goldrick-Rab (2010) reminds us of the importance of linking course material to practical application. These contextualized learning strategies build strong connections to real world experience. It provides students with hands on learning and allows them to connect their understanding to why the coursework is important. This exploratory learning opens doors of opportunity and augments the face to face classroom time by giving students supervision and coaching from those often in the industry they wish to join after graduation.

The CCCSE report (2013) recognizes that students participating in experiential learning outside the classroom show positive correlation with collaborative learning, academic challenge and student/faculty interaction (p. 20).

Tutoring

Tutoring, as a high-impact practice, is a proactive institutional practice to help students reduce the risk of failure. Using this model, the college monitors records such as: GPA's, high

credit load, late registration for classes and withdrawals (all actions shown to have a high failure rate). If a risk pattern is obvious or if an instructor has given an early warning of impending failure, an advisor contacts the student with an offer of tutoring support. They also provide intense counseling/coaching for students on probation and those just coming back from suspension. Tutoring at this level allows the college to initiate student contact with at risk students to provide assistance for their academic goals.

The CCCSE 2013 report indicates that tutoring, in this manner, has a strong, positive correlation with several areas of engagement: students feel strongly supported by the institute, experience positive interaction with faculty, believe they have the ability to engage in active and collaborative learning and an increase in student effort was noted (p.22).

Supplemental Instruction

Supplemental instruction (SI) provides a voluntary mechanism for students to get further direction on coursework that generally has a high failure rate (examples: math, chemistry, and anatomy and physiology). In class teaching is meant to introduce new materials and concepts to the student. Supplemental instruction is meant to help students assimilate the material, moving from new concept to practical application. As Oja (2012) relates, “Supplemental instruction programs target high-risk courses, rather than high-risk students” (p. 344).

Generally courses offering supplemental instruction are noted in the course schedule and must be registered for. To encourage students to make this voluntary effort, the supplemental instruction is free of charge. According to Boylan and Saxon (2005), SI may be additional instruction from a professor or can be run by a student leader who has gone to the

class, taken notes and then meets with students to discuss course material, help with homework and assist them in studying effectively (p. 7). Research shows that students who participate in SI surpass their counterparts in grades and in understanding of the material (Oja, 2012, p 347).

The CCCSE (2012) indicators relay that supplemental instruction can improve course completion rates significantly. It also suggests that the additional time spent with faculty/students builds essential relationships which influence student engagement (p.24).

Faculty Concerns

An often invalidated educational factor effecting persistence is the student's satisfaction with faculty. Community colleges don't often dwell on this aspect of retention because it goes against the economic bottom line, however, emerging research suggests that as society is changing, students foster a sense of entitlement and expect certain supportive and positive reinforcing behaviors from faculty (Jacobs, 2012). A critique of faculty has merit. Those who have been teaching for years may be entrenched in an unproductive teaching style and may not have a clear understanding of learning patterns represented by incoming students or newer teaching methods that might best meet their needs. Using teaching style as an indicator for course selection adds layers of decision making for students for course choices. Understanding their learning style may provide insight to which teacher (style) would be benefit them more. As an example, some teachers still maintain a "chalk and talk" style classroom, asking little of the students but homework and attendance, yet, there are some who are much more deliberate in creating a course. The pedagogical philosophy includes a dynamic interplay between instructor and student/or class. They have created the coursework so that they might engage a student in

shared learning experiences. This usually entails the need for deep understanding of the material (for both student and instructor) and may cause some students to feel overwhelmed by the coursework, if not handled well by a proven instructor. Braxton (2008) chides, "Higher education must make education programs fit diverse student learning styles, needs, and education backgrounds, or students will fail". Too many teachers lean on old training models and do not have a clear understanding of learning types and teaching strategies that engage a diverse student population (p. 5). This may be especially true for those who are teaching in adjunct positions and don't have a background in teaching methodology.

Braxton (2008) reports another interesting fact. He suggests that faculty (as opposed to adjunct faculty) must remain in control of gate-keeper courses; introductory coursework required for enrollment into a major. He posits that these introductory courses allow students to begin to settle in and gain a sense of community with the faculty member and their peers, something that may not happen with adjunct faculty who are not at the campus except to teach a class or two. Students begin building relationships with teachers during the very first semester. Progress is made when relationships are built with those who will be available throughout their tenure at the institute. This sense of belonging is imperative for persistence (p. 42).

Research on high-risk students who successfully completed college finds that student's report their success was based on the guidance or counsel of one person at a *critical point* in their journey. Most often these were a faculty member or a mentor at the college they attended who they had formed a connection with. The student reported gaining a sense of hope and a sense of their ability to accomplish what they began because of the association and

reported that they probably would not have stuck it out if the intervention had not taken place (Schreiner, Noel, Anderson, & Cantwell, 2011, p. 322).

It is noted that to foster mentees successfully, one must be approachable and authentic. Those who are known as encouragers seem to have a repertoire of engaging behaviors that, from the students perspective, make a difference because the teacher cares (Schreiner, Noel, Anderson, & Cantwell, 2011, p. 328). The faculty mentors who seemed to have the most impact on their students were those with whom the student had the most interaction; those faculty who had a passion for their work and were willing to invest time and energy into their student, and those who were able to convey that they genuinely liked the student and were interested in what was happening in their life; they listened (Schreiner, Noel, Anderson, & Cantwell, 2011, p. 332).

While this high impact practice is not on the CCCSE (2013) list, this researcher sees this as an extension of intrusive advising and supplemental instruction. The practice allows students to gain encouragement from at least one supportive quality relationship at the college and meets the goal of encouraging faculty-student interactions (CCCSE, 2013, p.7).

Reverse Transfer

Students who leave a community college without finishing their degree to transfer into a four year college are often, through mandatory reporting mechanisms, considered a stop out or drop out and are not able to be counted in the graduation success column for a community college. The National Center for Education Statistics for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a mandatory reporting agency for colleges, only collect graduation data on first-time, full-time students who complete a degree at an institution at which they began and

in which they took no more than one and a half times the required time it would normally take to complete the degree (Ekal and Krebs, 2011). Therefore, students who transfer to a four-year college before graduating from the community college are counted in neither the community college's graduation count nor the four-year institutions graduation count. This is unfortunate for several reasons: 1) There are thousands of students all over the United States who choose this educational path to gain a four-year degree who are not going to be recorded as successful graduates from the community college system, taxpayers don't see the success of their support. 2) This could have financial impact because funding is so often attached to graduation numbers. 3) The student leaves the community college without credentials, which can be a blow to their self-esteem; the community college is not able to record the student as a graduate; and as retention research shows, many students after transferring to the university do not go on to finish a bachelor's degree without the underpinning of their associates degree (Porter, 1990). There is no current way for students who have been creative in their academic path to be recorded as having met their goal of degree attainment through the National Data Systems. There is, however, a way for the student to mark their success with the community college as well as move on to higher educational goals at a four-year institution; the answer is reverse-transfer agreements.

Working in tandem, the two year and four year colleges forge an agreement. The student may complete coursework for the associate program at the four-year institution and transfer those back into the two-year institution to complete the balance of their associate degree requirements. This reverse-transfer agreement seems to be a great work around for a fatal flaw in reporting successful students. The more local colleges and universities work

together to make transferring a seamless transition, the easier it will be for students to not only gain their credential, but be counted as having graduated and been successful.

While this high-impact practice is not included on the CCCSE (2013) list, this researcher is convinced of its place in the high-impact arena. If the goal for students is to persist at the community college and receive their well-earned degree, then a reverse transfer seems the only fair and equitable solution to help reach that goal. The CCCSE (2013) benchmarks for student engagement that could be met by this practice are: Student effort; academic challenge; high expectations and aspirations and a clear academic plan (CCCSE, 2013, p. 7).

For any of these high impact practices to be successful, they must be incorporated into the college milieu in a way that develops high quality praxis that has the ability to touch all students. The CCCSE (2013) report acknowledges, that individual discrete practices have some value, however, if significant change is to be made for retention, there must be heavy concentration of these practices in position and available to all students (p. 4).

Adaptive Leadership

We all have expectations of leaders. They are called upon to give answers, make decisions, pursue the vision, but what happens when an unfamiliar situation arises which challenges the current tool set of a leader or organization? What happens when there is no comfortable answer or no painless solution? What happens if the situation calls for the organization to change their culture and learn new ways? It is during these times that a leader must inspire adaptive capacity and that is the current challenge facing CMCC. Ron Heifetz (1994) writes extensively on Adaptive leadership. He describes this adaptive quality as a skillset

held in reserve, used as a response to demands that are outside of one's current repertoire or toolkit.

Leaders are often called upon to find permanent solutions to pressing issues. During an adaptive challenge, however, the adaptive leader moves the organization through an experimental approach to finding the best solution for their circumstances. *The outcome is to move toward a solution rather than to institute one.* Progress is often made through small adjustments until the whole is revealed. In an adaptive atmosphere, people shift their focus from past strategies to an atmosphere of discovery.

Research Methodology

This researcher used a qualitative study to determine how satisfied students were with the support structures currently available at Central Maine Community College (CMCC). The questions were designed to extract an understanding of what the students deemed as needed support structures to help them persist toward a degree. The design was meant to illicit honest feedback from students to help the researcher investigate the effectiveness of current practices.

The study methodology was reviewed by the University of Southern Maine's IRB office. The role of the researcher was to create the survey, secure the survey site, invite participants, and to process and analyze the data. The researcher was not a participant in the research and upheld, to the best of her ability, all ethical guidelines imposed by the IRB.

Research Design

Context

Targeted students for this study were those who took the First Year Seminar course at CMCC during the fall 2013 semester. This course prepares students for the college experience and is offered specifically to students in the Associates of Arts program at CMCC. The 1 credit course runs one full semester and is generally taken during the first or second semester in which the student attends. The course description reads:

LER 100 First-Year Seminar: This course, which follows a national model for first-year students, will provide students the information they need to be successful at CMCC. Through both classroom and campus activities, students will become familiar with advising services, campus resources, student organizations, financial literacy, and transfer information. Students will also explore majors and career options through a workshop, research assignment, and our partnership with Roadtrip Nation, as seen nationally on PBS.

During the fall 2013 semester there were twelve sections of LER 100 offered with a total of 183 potential survey takers. The researcher contacted the instructors of the course and together determined that the survey should be run toward the end of the semester to utilize the student's newly acquired knowledge of support services.

The survey was presented to the students, in each course section, the first week of November, 2013; the students were given until November 29th to complete the voluntary survey using Survey Monkey®.

The researcher received a letter of support from the Dean of Academic Affairs, Betsy Libby, as part of the IRB approval process. Additionally, all materials were approved by IRB and reviewed by the department chair for the LER 100 courses.

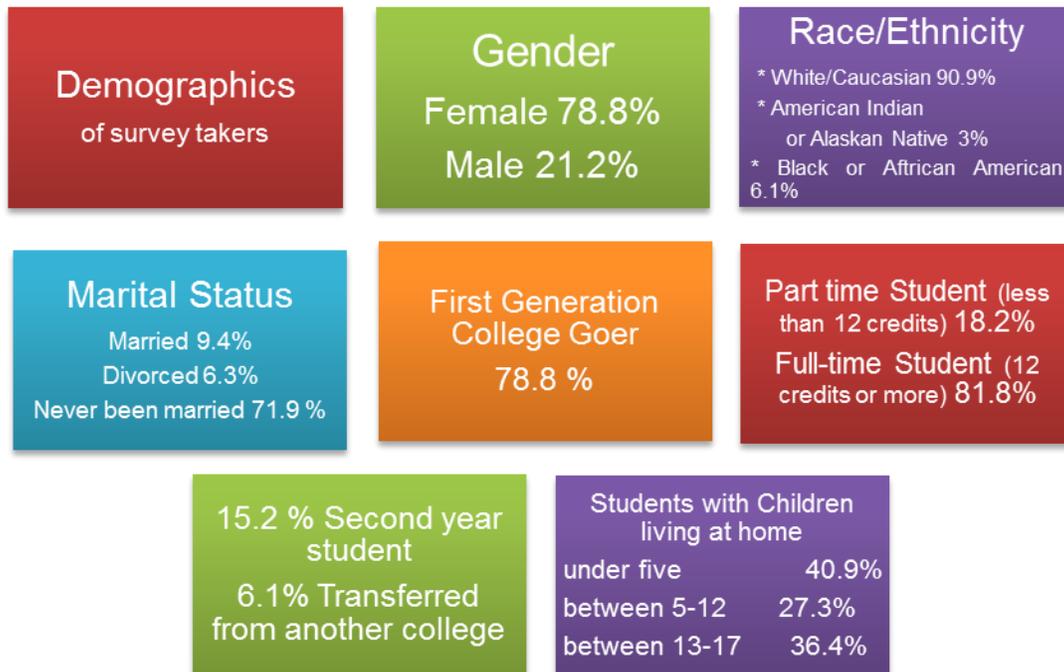
Procedure

The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey©. This was done with a minimum of expense and offered tools to help the researcher with data processing and analyzing. As Registrar of the college, the researcher had access to course class lists and student email, which were used, with permission of the college, to identify potential survey participants.

The researcher went to each individual class section to explain the survey and what the intentions of the survey were. After that brief introduction, an email was sent as *a letter to participants*, again explaining the survey and giving them a link to the survey. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research and participants voluntarily participated in answering the online survey which contained 34 questions related to their experience at CMCC.

There was some personal concern, of the researcher, that a perceived conflict of interest might arise because of the researcher's access to personal student information in her role as Registrar at the college. However after speaking with the Dean of Academic Affairs it was determined that this research is a natural extension of the researcher's position and one that will eventually help CMCC become better attuned to the student's needs at the institution.

Participants



Data Analysis

The initial hypothesis for this research suggests that when best practice support structures are in place, more students will persist to graduation.

The survey was created to determine how satisfied students were with current support services at CMCC. The survey did not prove as helpful as this researcher hoped. The overall satisfaction rate for support services offered was fairly high ranging from 49% - 87% with an average of 72.5% acknowledging they were completely satisfied or somewhat satisfied with student support services. On average there were only 9% of survey takers who were somewhat unsatisfied or completely unsatisfied concerning support services, more telling to this researcher were the 16% of survey takers who gave “neutral” as their answer, meaning they

were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with support services offered at Central Maine Community College. (See Appendix for final results.)

Discussion

If the survey is a true representation of the over 3000 students currently attending CMCC, the data would indicate that students are largely satisfied with CMCC. The concern is that the limited number of students responding to the survey may *not* be representative of the student body. Goldrick-Rab (2010) speaks to this in her research. She asserts that it is hard to assess student outcomes because of the diversity of goals and expectations each student comes to college with. If the institute measures success only by a small handful of students, it may create an illusion of success which will then reduce access to resources by needy students not counted within the calculations (p. 439). I fear this is the case. Might it be that students who are already savvy concerning student resources are also those who might take a voluntary survey? Might it be that students taking a required course may already have some of the skill set needed to succeed in college? Might it be that with over 78% of the survey takers being first generation college goers that they just don't know what they don't know and may not understand that there are few resources in place should they start to stumble? Or Might it be that students appreciate that the college is doing its current best to provide access to student supports and they want to show their appreciation by giving high marks. I am not sure what the answers to these questions are however, anecdotally, the numbers do not add up, as proven by our graduation rates. It may be that we need to ask questions with a different goal in mind.

As Central Maine Community College wrestles with changing the dynamic of student support, a culture shift is pivotal to success. The institution must shift focus from enrollment numbers (primarily) to retention and persistence and from a student deficit (meaning the student doesn't have X skill, therefore this support is needed) model to a student engagement (meaning intentionally engaging the student within the practices of the college to encourage learning) model. These shifts will take rethinking how we provide our support to students.

An adaptive leadership model might provide the internal catalyst for CMCC stakeholders to pursue this transformation. However substantial changes cannot be made lightly and without concerted effort.

There are a few response possibilities one can expect when changes of these magnitude take place within an organization: 1) People feel uncomfortable with this new model (disequilibrium) and try to restore what they know has worked in the past. This may work short-term but will eventually fail because the underlying issue is still not resolved. 2) The challenge may exceed the adaptive capacities of the culture or the institution. Some institutes do not have the resources to adapt or have not developed the flexibility needed to be adaptive, therefore new initiatives die before they can be explored or initiated. 3) Leadership acknowledges that a new response is required and invites participation for resolution through all levels of stakeholders.

This adaptive quality of leadership has been fairly absent at CMCC in regard to changes within the student services, changes have been made **to** the department, but never **with** the department and significant stakeholders. There has been several pushes to enhance support services in new and exciting ways, however these changes were eventually stymied because of

ongoing changes in the leadership structure, as the person spearheading the change moved on, there was no one left with the vision of what the end result was supposed to be. There is also the issue with the style of management within CMCC; the individual departments are left to the day to day operations without having a method or structure in place to interact with other stakeholders. Just in the past three years, whole departments have been decimated because the adaptive quality is absent or on life support within the CMCC culture.

Without encouragement to explore and allowing that mistakes give the ability to try another path, people become afraid to offer an unfamiliar view or an untried solution. For CMCC to encourage a new paradigm of adaptive leadership to work, Heifetz (1994) describes five strategic principles which need to be applied (p.128).

1. **Identify the adaptive challenge.** Analyze the challenge through the lens of what is at stake; unbundle what is happening underneath. Example: If CMCC decides to make changes to the way the college provides advising, this may cause those who are currently advising to become defensive. CMCC needs to proactively seek out the underlying issues causing the fear. This will help the institute unpack those concerns which need to be addressed before the changes can be made successfully.
2. **Keep the level of distress within a tolerable range for doing adaptive work.** There is a level of stress that people can work under and successfully produce results and then there is a level which produces chaos. An adaptive leader must understand those within the department well enough to manage and maintain the stress at a productive level.

- 3. Focus attention on ripening issues and not on stress-reducing distractions.** An adaptive leader must read the environment and keep people engaged in the challenge and redirect them as counterproductive avoidance mechanisms kick in. These might include: denial, scapegoating, and attacking individuals rather than issues.
- 4. Give the work back to the people, but at a rate they can stand.** Those who work in the area where the challenge resides should have a hand in developing a strategy to adapt.
- 5. Protect voices of leadership without authority.** Adaptive challenges necessitate a new view, an unrehearsed strategy. With this in mind, it is imperative that those who make the stretch to ask the hard questions and generate distress by uncovering internal incongruities are offered cover by leadership. These voices are often the ones who can generate internal (institutional) dialogue which may uncover the solution. If cover is not provided, trust is impacted and no one will feel safe to share their truth.

“When people are challenged the first line of defense is to apply the responses already in their repertoire. The solution for new problems, however, may lie outside the repertoire, which is exactly when adaptive work is needed” (Heifetz (1994, p. 47).

Current CMCC resources offered to support persistence

Central Maine Community College has worked hard over the last several years to improve the quality of student support services for its students. However, the support comes through individual spheres and is not a well-conducted strategy put into effect with intention.

There is reason for that, as Goldrick-Rab (2010) reminds us that current funding formulas for public colleges are based on enrollment. Money therefore goes to schools that can get the students enrolled not to those who are trying to help students persist to graduation (p. 444). It has only been in recent years that the social impact of not having students graduate after investing millions of dollars in time and resources that the paradigm is shifting.

One of the first federal programs to take on the role of retention and thus, persistence, is the federal Trio program⁶. Currently, this is CMCC's major source of support for high risk students. This program provides student resources designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Trio services include: academic advising, transfer advising, tutoring, cultural activities and workshops and programming for study skills, time management, etc. and is monitored extensively to assure that they are meeting their yearly benchmarks (CMCC website, Trio Student Support). The services offered by Trio are all important, high-impact practices that have been shown to be effective supports for retention, however, due to grant requirements, the Trio program can only serve 175 students per academic year at CMCC, a very small portion of the current 3109 (fall 2013 headcount) students attending (Office of Planning and Public Affairs, 2014). Obviously there are more than 175 needy students at CMCC. What resources are available to them?

Orientation

Students accepted into CMCC are assigned a date in which a voluntary orientation takes place for their major/program. This is approximately a two-hour crash course that introduces

⁶The eligibility requirements for a student to receive support from Trio are: student must meet the low-income guidelines (income at 150% or less of federal poverty level, be a first generation college student or have a disability that would require extra support, and the services are provided on a first come first serve basis.

new students to the campus and the campus resources. It introduces them to important academic policies, the program chair, major offices and the people who serve in key areas. A tour is given to familiarized students with offices and resources that can be found on campus. They are brought to the library to get a student ID, and then are given updates concerning paperwork they may be missing in financial aid (if they have filed) or immunization records and offered assistance with any other unanswered questions. Once they have completed this odyssey, the student is then led to a computer lab where they will be met by one of several orientation leaders. It is their responsibility to teach the new student how to log into the CMCC system and register for classes.

Evaluation

The CMCC orientation has a conveyor belt feel to it. Students are brought from one place to the next; the goal is to introduce the college and its services to the student. There is a lot of information given in a two-hour session (students may stay longer to finalize items, if necessary).

CMCC orientation has only been officially in place the past three semesters. The orientation team continues to evaluate and restructure the process as they learn what it takes to create a process that helps incoming students feel welcomed and engaged with the college and their new classmates.

First Year Seminar

LER 100 is designed to be a college preparedness course for students in the Associates of Arts (AA) program at CMCC. While open to all programs, LER 100 is a *requirement* for students in the AA programs. The one credit course runs one full semester and is generally

taken during the first semester in which the student attends. The course content follows a national model for first-year students and has the intention of providing them with the information they need to become successful at CMCC. The course covers, time management, resource acquisition, career exploration, study skills, self-advocacy, student engagement all the while, allowing students to interact with one another to form bonds that will hopefully carry through and encourage social interaction. The course uses both class and campus activities to help the student become familiar with advising services, campus resources, student organizations, financial literacy, and transfer information. Students also explore majors and career options through workshop and research assignments.

Evaluation

There are about twelve to fifteen sections of LER 100 taught at CMCC every semester. Finding instructors who are willing to offer this course has been challenging. Faculty and adjuncts are limited in the amount of course credits they can offer each semester (contractual) therefore most will not give up a three credit class to teach a one credit class for financial reasons.

This researcher sat through one class of each section of the fall 2013, LER 100 courses. Several instructors were engaging and artistic as they pulled students into conversation, applying the coursework to everyday life and situations which students could relate to and understand. Others left a lot on the table; students came, seemingly, only to fill the seat and meet the requirement but were uninterested in content and not engaged.

In the report on high impact practices, Brownell and Swaner (2009) report that while first-year seminar courses are effective, this type of course varies widely in credit content from

college to college. Those classes that meet for only one hour per week tend to focus on increased knowledge of the campus. Two credit courses, meeting for two hours can really expand into time management and study skills as well as make deeper student/faculty connections. Three hours of student contact are needed when the course intent is to increase student academic skills and allow for growth in critical thinking (Brownell and Swaner, 2009, p. 27).

Advising

All students who have been admitted into a program at CMCC are assigned a primary advisor. Advisors for specific programs come directly from the teaching staff in the program. The primary role of the Academic Advisor is to guide the student toward the accomplishment of the individual's academic goals. According to the CMCC website (Academic Assistance) the primary functions of the Academic Advisor are to:

- Meet with the student periodically to review her/his academic status and progress.
- Review and approve registrations for official enrollment with the Registrar.
- Review and provide advice on student plans for adding or dropping previously approved courses.
- Maintain matriculation worksheets (audits) based upon the program catalog requirements in effect in the first semester of the student's enrollment; and
- Refer student to appropriate college personnel when necessary.

Evaluation

Students in the technological programs and Associate in Science programs are often in a tough spot when it comes to advisors. Students may utilize the advising center to help them register for course work; however, it is those with program understanding that should be advising students on course selection and programmatic requirements. While that is the ideal, CMCC only has 125 full time faculty and staff serving 25 programs (Office of Planning and Public

Affairs, 2014) and most of CMCC's instructors are adjunct faculty. The struggle in using these as advisors is that they are not readily available to the students so students often seek outside of their program to get information, this often is inconsistent with how the program is meant to run causing students to take unnecessary coursework and prolonging their degree.

There are, currently, three professional advisors in the Learning and Advising Center. Without additional resources, these few people, no matter how good in their field, cannot meet the needs of all the students at CMCC. With the limited counselor availability, it is next to impossible to provide adequate advising and create long term goals when there is not enough time to interact with the student and learn what their academic aspirations are (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum, 2003, p. 128). With this limited accessibility to counselors, students often make costly mistakes in course choice and in understanding their program requirements. Many students do not have information needed to be self -advised. As an example a student who has taken two semesters of remedial coursework may still be under the assumption that she will graduate in the two year window stated in the admissions pamphlet or a student doesn't understand the difference between electives and required coursework so may take more electives than can qualify for their program. An unwise choice in course selection can have financial and time ramifications for the student. The risk of student error is great because as Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum write, students don't know what they don't know (2003, P. 131).

In an effort to provide tools for advisors in meeting this need, it is this researcher's view that a two-year course schedule would be beneficial. When students are able to see the schedule of the classes they will need to take over the two academic years they are in a

program, it allows them to proactively engage in choosing the classes that meet their program requirements, resulting in less course withdrawal and course selection error.

Learning and Advising Center

CMCC implemented the Learning and Advising Center (LAC) approximately three years ago. It is a walk-in service whose main emphasis is to advise the students in either of the two AA programs (General or Liberal Studies). Three full-time advisors staff the LAC. Students are advised on a first come first serve basis. There are no assigned advisors.

Evaluation

Trying to meet the needs of over 800 students as walk-ins can be overwhelming to the advising center. In the past year there has been great turn-over in staff because of the demands of the office. This has put a real dent in the services that should and could be offered to students if it was staffed fully.

Tutoring

Tutoring can be arranged through the Learning and Advising Center. High-achieving students who have mastered appropriate course content are used as tutors.

Evaluation

The Learning and Advising Center (LAC) does a great job of finding appropriate students to tutor. In some cases, they have used hard to come by resources to hire a professional tutor if a student could not be found. The problem arises around student efficacy. Many students who could use help in coursework do not have the skill set to self-advocate, so go without, often leading to failure in the classroom.

Writing Center

The Writing Center provides supplemental instruction and/or advice on editing and revising in all phases of the writing experience for students working on writing assignments for a CMCC course, resumes, essays for scholarships, and college admissions. The Writing Center is staffed by experienced writing instructors and can be utilized by appointment or at drop in times.

Evaluation

Much like the tutoring in the advising center, the writing center provides a tremendous service for students. Those who take advantage of it, sing its praises. However, students who are ill prepared to seek out interventions or to ask for assistance are going to lose out on this resource, and they are most likely the ones who could use it most.

Remedial Coursework

Applicants whose SAT score is lower than 480 in math and/or English or have not successfully completed college-level coursework in math and English must take the Accuplacer© placement assessment test. These assessments test students in reading, writing, basic math and algebra. It helps the college determine best course placement for students to be successful when entering CMCC. Students are placed in courses depending on the scores they achieve in the various areas of assessment in Accuplacer©. Those who do not meet the requirements for ENG 101 or MAT 100 or higher, will be placed in preparatory coursework.

There are two types of remedial coursework at CMCC. One is designed for those who English is their first language at home. The other is for those where English is their second

language and for those they will take ESL (English as a Second Language) courses to help build their skills.

Currently there are three levels of remedial English and two for remedial Math. Remedial English consists of: ENG 021-Basic Writing, ENG 030- Reading Workshop, and ENG 050-Introduction to Academic Reading. Many students come in needing at least two of these courses. Remedial math consists of MAT 030-Basic Math and MAT 050- Algebra I.

There are two levels of ESL coursework. One is for remedial help for those needing help in reading and writing and then college level ESL coursework which offers practice in reading and writing while they take coursework that counts toward their degree.

Remedial ESL courses consist of: ESL 071- English as a Second Language – Writing, ESL 072 -English as a Second Language – Reading, and ESL 073- English as a Second Language – Oral. Once coursework has been passed successfully, with a C or better, the student can go on to the next level of coursework. However, a large portion of students must go through two or more levels of both English and Math in order to prepare them for the rigors of college English and College Math.

Evaluation

Remedial coursework takes a huge amount of resources from the college's main mission to provide college level courses. The time, facility use and dollars used, seem unfortunate when students get little or no college credits toward their program and are paying college tuition to get the help.

In the fall 2014 semester we will begin a new series of remedial English which will allow remedial students to receive 4 academic credits and will include writing lab time for them to enhance their skills. This is a positive change that should help a large portion of students.

Transfer Advising

Preparing students for transfer to a four-year institution is part of the mission of CMCC. Students are strongly encouraged to seek transfer information as early as their first semester. Early transfer advising helps students to plan coursework in a way that maximizes their transfer credits. CMCC has articulation agreements with several Universities and colleges in the area which effectively streamlines the transfer process.

Evaluation

Transfer advising is hugely successful at CMCC. Students are able to get pertinent information about college fairs, set up appointments with future colleges, and using agreements with several Maine and New Hampshire colleges, can take up to 15 extra credits at CMCC, at the lower tuition rate, before actually transferring to the bachelor's program. This is a great bonus for the students. Student's taking advantage of this get priority registration dates.

While there is always room to grow and restructure, CMCC has done a pretty good job with student services and their services are expanding all the time. Economics being as they are, and with the community support, often lagging, there has not been a lot of extra money to create an encompassing vision. If there is one real criticism for the services it is that they are not coordinated. Each service operates in their own sphere, often duplicating efforts, or tripping over another service all because there isn't a shared vision.

Recommendations for changes in support services

In the true spirit of adaptive leadership, reiterating that the outcome for great change is made incrementally and by shared vision, it is this researcher's recommendation that a retention committee, with stakeholders from all departments, be convened at Central Maine Community College. The committee could be tasked with bringing forth a long term plan of action to enhance support services with an eye on retention support, student engagement, and with graduation completion being the goal.

A summary of *possible* initiatives wrought from this research is below. This is, at best, an attempt to highlight areas which seem, in this researcher's view, to be lacking within the support services at CMCC. A committee of invested participants could provide a more thorough review of each individual support currently available and determine whether or not improvements are necessary, and if so, the best method of enhancement and a full recommendation for implementation to the President's council.

1. Develop an online tutorial for prospective CMCC students to **take before** they take assessments for placement into the college.
2. Develop protocol to identify first generation students during the admissions process and give them a higher degree of financial aid counseling during their admissions process.
3. Develop a parent orientation to coincide with the student orientation to help prepare parents to support their new college student.
4. Increase the scope of orientation and the length of time students and parents are to be on campus during orientation. Include specific support for the parents during this process.

5. Develop an Academic goal setting template to use with prospective students in the admission's department. This becomes part of the student advising record to help advisors counsel students to meet their intended goal.
6. Further research Learning Communities to determine whether or not this method of teaching/learning might provide beneficial learning support for at risk students at CMCC.
7. Develop an alert and intervention system for high risk or at risk students.
8. Restructure the advising practices of CMCC to include intrusive advising for at-risk or high-risk students in all majors. In an effort to advocate a culture of completion for CMCC students, those students who receive a mid-term warning or whose GPA is under 2.0, or for those who withdraw from coursework after the add/drop period has ended should receive a communication from their advisor inviting them for counsel and together work out an academic plan of action and set academic goals to help the student complete their degree.
9. Increase the number of assigned professional advisors in the learning and advising center (LAC) in place of adjunct/faculty advisors. The LAC is opened at hours that are convenient for the student while faculty advisors are limited in their time spent on campus and can seem unreachable. This has caused hardship for many students often resulting in poor class choice, incorrect advising and lack of relationship with a mentor.
10. Increase the first year seminar from a one credit course to a three credit course; the focus of the additional hours would be well spent on increasing academic skills and student engagement. It should remain mandatory for all Associate of Arts majors and

taken the first semester for the fullest benefit to students. Training for faculty in the pedagogy of first year seminars should be available for those who have not taught this course.

11. Continue transitioning from solely remedial coursework to *bridge* courses – college credit courses that include both remedial and college level instruction that will meet requirements of the degree (i.e. College Writing Workshop, 4 credits)
12. Consider summer bridge program as a tutorial for students who have taken the Accuplacer and have scored just below the recommended level. This should be considered intensive tutoring to help students remember some of the basic skills, not meant as an introductory course.
13. Utilize supplemental instruction for coursework that has a high rate of withdrawals and/or high rate of failure.
14. Utilize full-time faculty for gate keeper courses.
15. Develop procedures to make Reverse Transfers from four year institutes easier to participate in.
16. Develop a two year academic course schedule to make it easier for students to plan for their tenure at CMCC.

Conclusion

Central Maine Community College's access mission has been built on low tuition, flexible scheduling, and an open admission policy. The programs are designed to support at-risk students who come with a variety of social and academic barriers to postsecondary success. As an open access institution, Central Maine Community College is available to almost all students, regardless of ability, academic background, or enrollment intentions.

In order to raise student persistence outcomes CMCC must strive to identify and engage in institutional practices that will promote success for all of their students. In its recent history, CMCC has given a great deal of attention to enrollment numbers. It is time for a paradigm shift and focus on supporting currently matriculated students in their graduation efforts. CMCC can do this best by utilizing a retention team to reevaluate and enhance its support services.

Appendices

CMCC Student Survey results

Pgs. 61-62

Quick Reference Table for Support Recommendations

Pgs. 63-64

Support Structures Available for Students at CMCC Survey created on Survey Monkey© by Sonya Sampson

Question	Completely Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Completely Unsatisfied	Not Applicable	Response Rate
I am satisfied with the courses offered at CMCC.	13	9	6	3	2	0	33
I am satisfied with the courses offered at CMCC.	10	13	8	2	0	0	33
I am satisfied with the availability of courses offered at CMCC.	8	16	4	5	0	0	33
Overall, I am satisfied with the response to questions I receive from staff at CMCC.	11	15	4	1	1	0	32
I am satisfied with the hours of operation in the financial aid office	15	8	4	3	0	2	32
I am satisfied with the financial aid office staff's willingness to help me understand and/or fill out the FAFSA forms	14	9	5	7	0	4	33
I am satisfied that the financial aid office provided me with all the information I needed to make informed decisions about my financial aid package.	14	9	4	1	2	3	33
I am satisfied with CMCC orientation.	19	8	2	3	0	1	33
I am satisfied that my advisors know the correct information to give me about my program.	14	11	6	2	0	0	33
I am satisfied that my advisors know the correct courses that I must take to meet program requirements.	10	15	6	0	1	0	32
I am satisfied with my course registration experience.	13	11	4	5	0	0	33
I am satisfied with the information I received concerning support services the college offers	15	9	6	1	0	1	32
I am satisfied that I know which office to contact to answer personal questions.	9	12	7	4	0	0	32
I am satisfied with the connection my instructors have tried to make with me on a personal level	10	9	7	6	0	0	32
I am satisfied that instructors show awareness of how the students in their class respond to their teaching style and/or methods	9	11	7	6	0	0	33

I am satisfied with the willingness of the instructors to give me extra help after class	9	14	8	0	2	0	33
I am satisfied with the opportunities to meet other students	16	11	5	0	0	0	32
I am satisfied with the opportunities to connect with other students in my classes	11	16	4	1	1	0	33
I am satisfied with the opportunities to work in groups of students within classes.	11	13	6	0	2	0	32
I am satisfied with the amount of support CMCC offers students to help them become successful	13	16	2	2	0	0	33
I am satisfied with my connection to the CMCC community	10	14	8	1	0	0	33
I am satisfied with the ease of finding tutors to help me in my individual classes	8	10	6	3	1	5	33
How valued do you feel as a student to the staff/faculty at CMCC?	12	12	5	3	0	0	32
Overall, are you satisfied with your experience at this college?	11	14	4	2	0	0	31
Overall, do you believe that the support structures at CMCC give you the resources you need to finish your degree here at the college?	15	12	5	1	0	0	33
What other support(s) do you need to succeed as a student at CMCC?							
Responses to last question							
• I feel satisfied as of now							
• N/A							
• I need the support of my family							
• Disability coordinator							
• For administration to listen to students.							
• Financial aid support							
• A printed guide for all services							
• Career placement							
	8						

High Impact Practice	CMCC Current Practice	Recommendation for Review
Assessment and Placement		Develop an online tutorial for prospective CMCC students to take before they take assessments for placement into the college.
Student Orientation	Orientation	Increase the length of time for students and parents to be on campus during orientation. Include specific support for the parents during this process.
Parent Orientation		Develop a parent orientation to coincide with the student orientation to help prepare them to support their new college student.
In depth Financial Aid Counseling	Financial Aid given at student request.	Develop protocol to identify first generation students during the admissions process and give them a higher degree of financial aid counseling during their admissions process.
Academic Goal Setting/ Planning		Develop an Academic goal setting template to use with prospective students in the admission's department. This becomes part of the student advising record to help advisors counsel students to meet their intended goal.
Intrusive Advising	Advising	Restructure the advising practices of CMCC to include intrusive advising for at-risk or high-risk students in all majors. In an effort to advocate a culture of completion for CMCC students, those students who receive a mid-term warning or whose GPA is under 2.0, or for those who withdraw from coursework after the add/drop period has ended should receive a communication from their advisor inviting them for counsel and together work out an academic plan of action and set academic goals to help the student complete their degree.
Professional Advisors	Learning & Advising Center	Increase the number of assigned professional advisors in the learning and advising center (LAC) in place of adjunct/faculty advisors. The LAC is opened at hours that are convenient for the student while faculty advisors are limited in their time spent on campus and can seem unreachable. This has caused hardship for many students often resulting in poor class choice, incorrect advising and lack of relationship with a mentor
Accelerated Remedial Education	Remedial Coursework	Continue transitioning from solely remedial coursework to <i>bridge</i> courses – college credit courses that include both remedial and college level instruction that will meet requirements of the degree (i.e. College Writing Workshop, 4 credits)
First Year Experience	First Year Seminar	Increase the first year seminar from a one credit course to a three credit course; the focus of the additional hours would be well spent on increasing academic skills and student engagement. It should remain mandatory for all Associate of Arts majors and taken the first semester for the fullest benefit to students. Training for faculty in the pedagogy of first year seminars should be available for those who have not taught this course.
Learning Community		Further research Learning Communities to determine whether or not this method of teaching/learning might provide beneficial learning support for at risk students at CMCC.

High Impact Practice	CMCC Current Practice	Recommendation for Review
Alert and Intervention	Voluntary Mid Term Warning	Develop an alert and intervention system for high risk or at risk students.
Experiential Learning	Field Experience	No recommendation at this time
Tutoring	Tutoring/Writing Center	Consider summer bridge program as a tutorial for students who have taken the Accuplacer and have scored just below the recommended level. This should be considered intensive tutoring to help students remember some of the basic skills, not meant as an introductory course.
Supplemental Instruction		Utilize supplemental instruction for coursework that has a high rate of withdrawals and/or high rate of failure.
Faculty Participation	High Number of Adjuncts	Utilize full-time faculty for gate keeper courses.
Reverse Transfer	Transfer Advising	Develop procedures to make Reverse Transfers from four year institutes easier to participate in.

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