

Achieving the Dream Washington's Community & Technical Colleges Evaluation

Lower Columbia College Profile December 2012

**Deena Heg and Bob Watrus
for College Spark Washington**

Introduction/Overview

An independent, third party evaluation of Washington State's Achieving the Dream Initiative is being conducted to document and evaluate the impact of the initiative on the 10 community and technical colleges participating during 2012-2015, provide timely feedback to the colleges to help inform their efforts going forward, and document lessons learned and their implications for practice and policy. One of the first steps in the evaluation is to conduct a baseline assessment and develop AtD profiles for each of the colleges. The profiles aim to provide a picture of where the colleges are at, where they are going, and how they plan to get there. More specifically, the profiles include:

- An assessment of where colleges are at in terms of AtD's principles of institutional improvement: committed leadership; use of evidence to improve policies, programs, and services; broad engagement; and systemic institutional improvement.
- A summary of colleges' AtD strategic interventions and results.
- Baseline Student Achievement Initiative data, provided by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.
- Opportunities and challenges.

The profiles are based on colleges' AtD applications, readiness assessments, and planning year work plans; college site visits and structured interviews and focus groups with faculty, staff, administrators, and students; planning year activities; implementation plans; and various AtD reports and documents.

During the next three years of the initiative, progress against these profiles will be assessed, using Student Achievement Initiative data at the institutional and intervention level, annual AtD reports and other documents, and site visits and structured interviews.

Lower Columbia College

Lower Columbia College is located in Longview and serves a two county area in southwest Washington (Cowlitz and Wahkiakum). The area's population is well below the state average in terms of socioeconomic status and educational attainment. And it's an area hard hit by recent economic conditions. For example, the area's unemployment rate was over 11 percent in August 2012. The college offers the area's residents a mix of educational opportunities: academic transfer, professional technical, community and customized education, and developmental education. In the 2011-12 academic year, the college had a total student headcount of over 7,600 or almost 3,600 full time equivalents (FTEs). In terms of enrollment distribution, about 43 percent were academic, 28 percent workforce, 20 percent basic skills, and nine percent pre-college. In terms of demographics, many students at the college are low income. One study found

its students highly concentrated in the two lowest income quintiles. About 18 percent are students of color; by comparison, about 90 percent of the area's population is white.

AtD Principles of Institutional Improvement

Committed Leadership

Senior college leaders actively support efforts to improve student success, not just to increase enrollments, and are committed to achieving equity in student outcomes across racial, ethnic, and income groups. Administrators, board members, and faculty and staff leaders demonstrate a willingness to make changes in policies, programs, and resource allocation to improve student success.

Lower Columbia College's vision for student success is reflected in its mission – “to ensure each learner's success.” To gauge progress in meeting its mission and make course corrections as needed, the college has adopted college outcomes and corresponding key performance indicators (e.g., student retention and completion), and conducts an annual review and monitoring process, as reported in the college's AtD application. This process includes:

- Review of outcomes and key performance indicators by faculty and staff teams.
- Reports on strengths, weaknesses, and actions taken to improve outcomes.
- Review team members meeting with the president each year to assist in development of the college's annual priorities – strategies and initiatives that drive the budget development process.
- Regular progress reports to the board of trustees.

In terms of its vision for equity, the college is “committed to promoting student success and achieving excellence across all demographic areas.” Along income lines, the college has one of the highest percentages of students coming from lower socio-economic groups in the state – about 70 percent. And it serves a moderate proportion of students of color – almost 20 percent. The surrounding area is not very racially/ethnically diverse; however, the Hispanic population is growing. The college noted that a major focus in recent years has been on transitioning more basic skills and pre-college students into college level courses; this population includes large numbers of students of color who also face economic challenges.

The college reported that leadership mobilizes support for its vision in the college through professional development, departmental planning, annual monitoring of outcomes and key performance indicators, and operational planning and budget setting processes; and in the community by working with partners such as the school district, WorkSource, the Department of Social and Health Services, and workforce development entities to leverage resources and promote student achievement.

In its AtD readiness assessment, Lower Columbia identified the following as areas of strength or extensive implementation:

- Active leadership support for efforts to improve student learning and completion.
- Regular reports to the board on student outcomes and the impact of efforts to improve success rates.
- Demonstrated willingness to support changes in policies, procedures, and resource allocation to improve student success.

Areas in which the college reported the need for improvement or more extensive implementation include:

- Explicit policy commitment to achieve equity in student outcomes across racial/ethnic and income groups and communication of this policy to faculty, staff, students and the community. The college reports that equity along income lines has been much more explicitly addressed and communicated than equity for students along racial/ethnic lines.
- Institutional communications emphasizing a student success agenda.

Leadership changes at the college include a new president – Chris Bailey – as of fall 2011. In an interview conducted as part of the baseline assessment, Bailey noted that AtD builds on, aligns with, and helps advance institutional change efforts already underway at the college, including its annual review and monitoring process, pre-college math and English reforms, the Student Achievement Initiative, and the Governance Institute for Student Success (GISS).

As part of its AtD planning efforts, Lower Columbia established a combined core and data team made up of the president; vice presidents for instruction, student success and administrative services; and key faculty, staff and administrators.

Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs & Services

The college establishes processes for using data about student progression and outcomes to identify achievement gaps among student groups, formulates strategies for addressing the gaps identified and improving student success overall, and evaluates the effectiveness of those strategies.

Lower Columbia's annual institutional monitoring of its outcomes and key performance indicators relies heavily on the use of evidence—such as student unit data—to make improvements in policies, programs, and services. The college also reported using data in its regular review of programs, curricula, and degrees. Results contribute to the college's annual priorities, goal setting and budget process, as well as action plans. Obstacles in using evidence to improve programs and services, as reported by the college, include use of technology to promote a culture of evidence, benchmarking, variation in the quality of indicators used to measure progress, timely availability of data, and insufficient definition of some performance indicators.

In its AtD readiness assessment, Lower Columbia identified the following as areas of strength or extensive implementation:

- Institutional monitoring process (described above), which the college identifies as its key strength.
- Routine use of longitudinal data on cohorts of students to chart student progression and outcomes.
- Routine engagement of college personnel in reviewing data on student achievement and developing and/or refining strategies.
- Routine use of evaluation to gauge the effectiveness of efforts to improve student success, and improve policy and practice.

Areas in which the college reported the need for improvement or more extensive implementation include:

- IT capacity to meet demand for data and research. The college identifies this as its key weakness, resulting in bottlenecks. Its IT capacity has been hampered by state budget cuts, staff turnover, and an inadequate state legacy data system.
- IR capacity to meet demand for data and research.
- Use of surveys and focus groups to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in programs and services. The college reports doing a lot in terms of student surveys, but less by way of faculty and staff surveys. Focus groups are limited, due largely to staffing levels.

At the start of AtD, Lower Columbia's institutional research capacity consisted of a full time director of institutional research, planning and assessment. During the planning year, the college hired a full time IR data manager, which has increased the college's capacity to produce ongoing data reports and respond to data requests. The college also added two IT staff and is developing an operational data store, which will provide faculty and staff timely access to relevant data.

Increasing institutional research capacity is also the focus of one of Lower Columbia's AtD strategic interventions. (See the "AtD Strategic Interventions & Results" section for specifics.)

As part of its AtD planning efforts, Lower Columbia analyzed quantitative data, including data on student retention, persistence, and completion; success rates in gateway and high risk, high volume courses; and Student Achievement Initiative momentum points – all broken down by student demographics. It also gathered qualitative data, conducting focus groups, root cause analyses, and a student survey. One result was the identification of several achievement gaps, including:

- Hispanic students have a lower persistence rate, as measured by fall to fall retention; and the gap is growing. In fall 2008, Hispanic students had a persistence rate of 48 percent, compared to 50 percent for other students of color and 58 percent for white students. By fall 2010, Hispanic students had a 24 percent persistence rate, compared to 44 percent for other students of color and 50 percent for white students. SAI data for 2010-11 also show that fewer Hispanic students reach key momentum points: 52 percent earn their first 15 college credits, compared to 51 percent for other students of color and 63 percent for white students; and 29 percent earn their first 30 college credits, compared to 33 percent for other students of color and 42 percent for white students.

In addition, Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CSSE) data show that students of color are less satisfied and report lower levels of support from the college and their families than white students.

A root cause analysis found:

- Course scheduling practices can create barriers for students who need to plan ahead and balance work and family with school.
- Support services may not be available at needed times or in Spanish. Lack of "college knowledge" can compound this.
- Finances are also critical, given family obligations in addition to school.
- Lack of computer literacy/access to technology is a barrier (digital divide).

- Students who are low income (based on qualification for need based aid) also have a lower persistence rate. In Fall 2008, low income students had a persistence rate of 54 percent, compared to 57 percent for those not low income. In Fall 2010, low income students had a persistence rate of 42 percent, compared to 57 percent for those not low income. SAI data show that fewer low income students reach key momentum points: 59 percent earn their first 15 college credits, compared to 64 percent for those not low income; 36 percent earn their first 30 college credits, compared to 46 percent for those not low income; and 20 percent earn their first quantitative course point, compared to 29 percent for those not low income. Low income students are also succeeding at lower rates in pre-college math and high risk, high volume courses.

A root cause analysis found:

- Lack of computer literacy/access to technology is a barrier (digital divide).
- First generation students often lack “college knowledge.”
- This group in particular may need individualized interventions, including teaching the behaviors as well as knowledge needed for success.
- Many enter academically underprepared and, as a result, have exposure to the least connected faculty and staff.

The college has already used results of its quantitative and qualitative data analysis to make changes. For example, it has adopted a new policy requiring students to register six weeks prior to the start of the quarter to ensure they are prepared. It has also moved to establish a center for diversity and equity, which will be housed in the newly remodeled student center and serve as a hub for professional development and student activities tied to strengthening equity at the college.

Broad Engagement

Faculty, student services staff, and administrators share responsibility for student success, and collaborate on assessing the effectiveness of programs and services and improving them. Other stakeholders with influence on student success (K-12 systems, community groups, employers, etc.) are included in discussions about student performance, desired outcomes, and potential improvement strategies. The college also gains invaluable insight about ways to improve student success from students themselves through surveys, focus groups, and/or advisory councils.

Lower Columbia uses its annual monitoring and review process to engage key stakeholders in problem solving and/or leadership activities, as reported in the college’s AtD application. Each of the college’s outcomes has its own review team made up of about a dozen faculty and staff. Monitoring reports are updated annually by IR and provided to the review teams, which meet to explore areas in which the college is doing well and areas in which the college needs to improve. Results are incorporated into monitoring reports. Review teams also meet with the president to set priorities.

There is also broad faculty engagement in the instructional assessment process; this includes developing indicators and gathering and analyzing data.

In its AtD readiness assessment, Lower Columbia identified the following areas as ones in which it is increasing the extent of implementation:

- Regular meeting of faculty to examine course and program outcomes and develop strategies for addressing achievement gaps and improving student success.
- Routine faculty assessment of academic programs and teaching strategies from the perspective of current research on effective practice.
- Routine student services staff assessment of student success strategies from the perspective of current research on effective practice.
- Alignment and extensive collaboration between academic/instructional affairs and student services on efforts to improve student success.

The college noted that faculty engagement varies significantly from department to department.

Areas in which the college reported the need for improvement or more extensive implementation include:

- Active student participation in efforts to improve student outcomes.
- Active engagement of part time or adjunct faculty in institutional efforts to improve student success (about two-thirds of Lower Columbia faculty are adjunct).

As part of its AtD planning efforts, Lower Columbia engaged the college community in a variety of ways, from all campus forums to data gathering and analysis and planning, development, and implementation of the AtD strategic interventions. More specifically, this included faculty, staff, and administrators serving on the combined core and data team, undertaking quantitative research studies, conducting student focus groups, participating in a series of root causes analysis sessions related to identified achievement gaps, and participating on work teams to develop strategic interventions. In addition, students participated in focus groups and surveys.

The college reports that the AtD planning process has increased engagement of faculty and staff at all levels of the college, and facilitated collaboration and innovation in a structured way.

In interviews conducted as part of the baseline assessment with faculty who had not been directly involved in AtD planning efforts, most reported having heard about AtD. Themes that emerged from these interviews included: AtD needs to build on and/or connect with efforts already underway (e.g., pre-college math and English reforms); and the work of AtD—goals, interventions, results, etc.—needs to be communicated widely.

Systemic Institutional Improvement

The college establishes planning processes that rely on data to set goals for student success and then uses the data to measure goal attainment. The college regularly evaluates its academic programs and services to determine how well they promote student success and how they can be improved. Decisions about budget allocations are based on evidence of program effectiveness and are linked to plans to increase student success. Faculty and staff are afforded professional development opportunities that reinforce efforts that help to close achievement gaps and improve overall student success.

In its AtD application, Lower Columbia reported having improved student success in recent years, as indicated by students earning Student Achievement Initiative momentum points at a rate faster than in the past. Retention and

progression rates have also increased. While noting some improvement may be due to economic conditions, the college pointed to the following programs, services, policies, and practices as contributing to improved success rates:

- I-BEST has had a positive impact on student completion rates. For example, 59 percent of the first I-BEST cohort completed a college credential within their first year at the college – more than 10 times the average completion rate for basic skills students.

Lower Columbia was also the first college in the state to offer a similar model—called I-TRANS— designed for basic skills students wanting to transfer to a four year college or university.

- Pre-college math is being redesigned to reduce the sequence from four to three courses. The college reports it is taking an all encompassing approach to redesign. It is replacing its methodology for testing and placement, along with all of its existing courses, its traditional math lab (instead, there is a math achievement center), and the traditional math textbook (instead, there are electronic resources and online homework support).
- Online instruction targets students who are working, have families, or have other time constraints. For example, the college's online nursing program makes it possible for Licensed Practical Nurses to pursue the Registered Nursing credential (LPN-2-RN Program). Factors contributing to the success of the college's online education include faculty training, student orientation and advising, and tutors.

Changes are tracked and evaluated as part of the college's annual monitoring and review process.

In its AtD readiness assessment, Lower Columbia identified the following as areas of strength or extensive implementation:

- A solid institutional effectiveness framework. One area needing more work, according to the college, is development of targets.
- Changes in instruction that have shifted the focus to evidence, program effectiveness, and student success.
- Annual plans driven by a limited set of strategic priorities that focus on student success.
- Strategic use of external grant funds to support systemic efforts to improve student outcomes broadly, not just for isolated projects that benefit small numbers of students.
- Integration of the student success agenda with accreditation activities.
- Standing committees responsible for guiding and monitoring efforts to improve student outcomes.
- Major meetings, organizational units and work groups that focus on student success.

Areas in which the college reported the need for improvement or more extensive implementation include:

- Professional development that reinforces efforts to improve student success and close achievement gaps. The college reports that investment in professional development has lost ground due to budget cuts and staff reductions. At the same time, the college is over-enrolled and staff is working harder than ever.

- Budget allocation decisions based on evidence of effectiveness and linked to plans to increase rates of student success.

Professional development is the focus of one of Lower Columbia's AtD strategic interventions—faculty-student engagement—and is integrated into others as well such as pre-college reform. (See the "AtD Strategic Interventions & Results" section for specifics.)

AtD Strategic Interventions & Results

Based on its AtD planning efforts, Lower Columbia developed and is implementing four strategic interventions: pre-college reform, first year experience, faculty-student engagement, and institutional research capacity.

Pre-College Reform

Lower Columbia's pre-college reform intervention focuses on reducing the number of students enrolled in pre-college courses, increasing the success rate of those who do enroll in pre-college courses, and reducing the amount of time it takes to move from pre-college to college level courses. More specifically, this includes:

- **Pre-college math reform** – Elements of the pre-college math reform, already underway at the start of AtD, include new diagnostic testing; a move from four levels of pre-college math to three; self-paced, modularized curriculum; and a math achievement center that offers one-on-one help. (See also the math boot camp described below.)

Although designed to benefit all students, this reform is expected to have its biggest impact on the most at-risk students, including low income and Hispanic students, given that they struggle with pre-college math at higher rates than other students.

Goals:

- 60% of students attempting to earn a development math point will be successful.
- 70% of students attempting to earn a quant point will be successful.

Evaluation plans call for measuring the percent of students that complete coursework with a grade of 2.0 or better, the percent that withdraw from courses, the percent that move on to college level math, and the percent that move on to college level math and complete coursework with a 2.0 or better. Also to be examined are success rates by different demographic groups.

This intervention is already being institutionalized. It is expected to reach about 2,000 students a year, the number enrolling in pre-college math each year.

The college has identified one possible related policy change: requiring students to take math during their first 15 credits of enrollment.

- **Pre-college English reform** – The key feature of this reform is the “bucket” course, in which all students testing into pre-college English are enrolled. After eight weeks of class, students are placed in either English 100 for those at the highest pre-college level or English 098 for those needing additional instruction, with placement based on an assessment of their work. Students placing at the lowest levels also take an additional reading course.

Goals:

- 70% of students attempting to earn a developmental English point will be successful.
- 70% of developmental English students moving on to college level English will receive a grade of 2.0 or better.

Evaluation plans call for measuring the percent of students that receive a 2.0 or better in pre-college English, the percent withdrawing, the percent that move on to college level English, and the percent that receive a 2.0 or better in college level English.

This intervention is already being institutionalized. It is expected to reach about 1,000 students a year, the number enrolling in pre-college English each year.

- **K-12 partnerships** – Elements of K-12 partnerships include curriculum alignment, early exposure to college placement diagnostics, and high school students taking the recommended high school math class and achieving the required grade proceeding to college level math.

Goal:

- 90% of students participating in the transcript agreement will receive a grade of 2.0 or better in their first college level math class.

Evaluation plans call for tracking students participating in the transcript agreement to measure their success rate in their first college level math course.

This intervention is initially targeted to high school students at two school districts and will reach about 30 students a year. If expanded to the entire service district, it would reach about 250 students a year.

- **Math boot camp** – The math boot camp is an intensive workshop that makes it possible for students to brush up on their math skills. The target population: new students who test into the lowest levels of pre-college math (Math 050 and Math 078). After boot camp, students retest, making it possible for them to jump pre-college math levels. Although focused on math, the boot camp will also provide an orientation to the college and introduce college success skills (e.g., time management, study skills, and test anxiety).

Goal:

- 70% of students attempting to earn a developmental math point will be successful (this is 10 percentage points higher than the current 60 percent included in the college's key performance indicators).

In addition to tracking the percent of students participating in the math boot camp that receive a 2.0 or better in developmental math, the college will track the percent that move up one or more levels after retesting at the end of the boot camp as well withdrawal rates in pre-college math.

This intervention is expected to reach 50 to 60 students, when piloted in fall 2012. If successful, the college will consider making the math boot camp mandatory for all new students testing into pre-college math. This would mean reaching well over 1,000 students a year.

The college has identified one possible related policy change: mandating math boot camp for all students testing below Math 088. For the pilot, students will be highly encouraged to participate.

First Year Experience

Lower Columbia's first year experience intervention aims to develop and strengthen the first year experience for students. This includes:

- **College success course** – This course will provide first quarter, certificate/degree seeking students the skills needed to succeed in college, addressing topics such as goal setting, time management, organization, test preparation, test taking, college culture, and financial literacy. Although targeted to all new students, it

is expected that this intervention will help close achievement gaps by providing underprepared students (e.g., low income students) the preparation and tools needed to succeed in college.

Goals:

- Increase fall to fall retention for full time students to 70% and part time students to 50%
- Increase percent of students obtaining first 15 and 30 college level credits by 20%
- Increase completion rate/tipping point to 40%
- Increase successful completion of pre-college math courses to 60%
- Increase successful completion of pre-college English courses to 70%

Preliminary evaluation plans call for tracking students who take the college success course, including retention and completion rates, compared to those who do not.

This intervention is expected to reach 50 students when it is piloted in fall 2012; 100 students in winter 2013; and 100 students in spring 2013. Afterwards, it is expected that all incoming students will take the college success course.

The college has identified one possible related policy change: making the college success course mandatory for all new students in their first quarter. However, further analysis needs to be done on the impact of such a decision on staffing, program curricula, and scheduling.

- **Advising and orientation** – This involves conducting a comprehensive review and reform of the college's advising and orientation model, beginning with engagement of faculty and staff in collaboratively mapping the student entry/advising process; and gathering of input from faculty and staff via interviews, focus groups, surveys, and forums. At the same time, it involves implementing "low hanging fruit" in advising best practice: involving faculty in orientation; establishing a six week admissions policy deadline; developing and piloting a digital literacy assessment; conducting an audit of intent codes to ensure students are assigned advisors related to students' programs of study; rolling out the advisory data portal; and revising the early alert system.

Advising and orientation reforms are designed to benefit all students; however, it is expected that they will help close achievement gaps by addressing issues shown to have an impact on the success of target populations (e.g., low digital literacy.)

Goals:

- Increase fall to fall retention for full time students to 70% and part time students to 50%
- Increase percent of students obtaining first 15 and 30 college level credits by 20%
- Increase completion rate/tipping point to 40%

Evaluation plans call for tracking retention, attainment of first 15 and 30 college level credits, and completion rates; and gathering qualitative feedback from students, faculty, and staff through surveys and focus groups.

This intervention is expected to reach all enrolled students.

One anticipated challenge identified by the college is the division between first quarter/entry advising and ongoing faculty advising.

Faculty-Student Engagement

This intervention focuses on strengthening faculty-student engagement. It includes holding in-service professional development sessions on classroom practice and student development/engagement, establishing a communications plan to encourage faculty to recognize the benefits of participating in the math achievement center and other informal learning environments; creating a faculty “coach” position to foster teaching excellence; creating opportunities for mutual learning and sharing teaching techniques; and setting up a small group instructional diagnosis program.

Goals:

- Increase student use of assigned academic advisors by 50%
- Increase fall to fall retention for full time students to 70% and part time students to 50%
- Increase completion rate/tipping point to 40%

Evaluation plans call for establishing and convening a faculty-student engagement committee to reflect on progress; tracking and monitoring faculty participation; conducting pre-post self-assessments; and participating in and reporting on results of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and Community College Survey of Faculty Engagement.

In a focus group conducted as part of the baseline assessment, students spoke of various ways to increase engagement both in and out of the classroom, including group projects, integrative studies, and office hours. For many, the larger issue was that of building relationships and creating a sense of community not only with faculty, but among students (peer support and mentoring was one suggestion here) and with staff, and the importance of this to student success.

Institutional Research Capacity

This intervention focuses on increasing Lower Columbia’s institutional research capacity. It includes the hiring of a full time IR data manager to increase capacity to produce ongoing data reports and respond to data requests. One key focus will be on equity; this includes identifying achievement gaps and measuring progress in closing those gaps as well as participating in campus wide efforts to increase equitable student success. The intervention also includes increasing technological capacity for data and data accessibility; developing a “data coach” or “data liaison” in each department to assist in creating a more grassroots culture of evidence; developing and offering a quarterly “Data 101” course for faculty and staff; developing a more clearly defined data request protocol; and increasing ongoing qualitative assessment to ensure continuous input from students, faculty, and staff.

In addition to existing institutional evaluation/assessment efforts (e.g., personnel evaluation procedures for the IR data manager and annual self-assessment process for the Office of Institutional Research), evaluation plans call for assessing the adequacy of IR and IT capacity to meet institutional needs and feedback on education and training on use of data.

Baseline Student Achievement Initiative Data

Baseline Student Achievement Initiative data, prepared by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, are provided on the following pages.

At the institutional level, SAI data are provided for cohorts of first time in fall students and cover the following data points:

- After One Year – SAI points earned, college level points earned, fall to winter and fall to spring retention, and highest momentum point earned (i.e., no momentum, basic skills, college ready point, 15 and 30 college level credits, quantitative point, and tipping point)
- After Two Years – Fall to fall retention, quantitative point earned, and highest momentum point earned
- After Four Years – Credential earned

All data are broken down by race/ethnicity and Pell Grant status.

(It should be noted that the After One Year data are for a 2010 cohort, After Two Years data a 2009 cohort, and After Four Years data a 2007 cohort. Data on these earlier cohorts will be replaced with data on the 2010 cohort, as they become available.)

Over the course of the next three years, comparable data will be provided on AtD cohorts to track their progress.

At the intervention level, colleges will also be using SAI data to track the progress of students taking part in their AtD interventions. Examples illustrating how SAI data can be used for this purpose, prepared by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, are provided on the following pages.

**Lower Columbia College
Student Achievement Initiative Data**

After One Year: Points, College Points, and Retention for the 2010 fall, first-time cohort

	Headcount	Total Points	% College Level Points	College Level Points Per Student	% Retained Fall To Winter	% Retained Fall To Spring
African American	26	72	36%	1.00	73%	65%
Asian/Pacific Islander	18	26	50%	0.72	56%	39%
Hispanic	47	111	49%	1.15	83%	64%
Native American	20	48	46%	1.10	60%	45%
Other	31	64	63%	1.29	71%	65%
White	681	1,680	52%	1.27	80%	68%
Race not reported	39	76	55%	1.08	77%	64%
Received Pell	454	1,151	48%	1.22	81%	66%
Did not receive Pell	408	926	55%	1.24	76%	66%
<i>Total</i>	862	2,077	51%	1.23	79%	66%

After Two Years: Fall to Fall Retention and Earning Quantitative Point for the 2009 fall, first-time cohort

	Headcount	% Retained Fall to Fall	% Earning Quantitative Point by End of 2nd Year
African American	17	41%	12%
Asian/Pacific Islander	24	42%	38%
Hispanic	38	42%	24%
Native American	22	27%	23%
Other	23	43%	39%
White	766	44%	33%
Race not reported	34	44%	47%
Received Pell	444	43%	31%
Did not receive Pell	480	44%	34%
<i>Total</i>	924	44%	33%

After One Year: Highest Momentum for the 2010 fall, first-time cohort

Highest Momentum	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Other	White	Received Pell	Did not Receive Pell	Total
No Momentum	27%	44%	21%	30%	26%	18%	17%	22%	20%
Basic Skills	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
College Ready Point	15%	17%	17%	20%	7%	13%	16%	10%	13%
15 College Level Credits	23%	6%	19%	15%	13%	21%	22%	20%	21%
30 College Level Credits	19%	17%	13%	5%	23%	18%	18%	16%	17%
Quantitative Point	15%	17%	17%	30%	26%	24%	22%	26%	24%
Tipping Point	0%	0%	13%	0%	7%	6%	5%	6%	6%

After Two Years: Highest Momentum for the 2009 fall, first-time cohort

Highest Momentum	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Other	White	Received Pell	Did not receive Pell	Total
No Momentum	12%	25%	24%	18%	17%	19%	16%	22%	19%
Basic Skills Gains	0%	0%	3%	5%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
College Ready Point	18%	4%	16%	18%	4%	10%	12%	8%	14%
15 College Level Credits	12%	8%	18%	18%	9%	14%	14%	14%	14%
30 College Level Credits	18%	17%	5%	18%	26%	16%	17%	14%	16%
Quantitative Point	12%	25%	21%	18%	30%	22%	22%	23%	23%
Tipping Point	29%	21%	13%	5%	13%	18%	17%	18%	18%

After Four Years: Credential Earned for the 2007 fall, first-time cohort

	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Other	White	Received Pell	Did not receive Pell	Total
Cohort Headcount	11	16	41	15	23	556	124	265	687
Percent earning credential	18%	19%	39%	7%	39%	28%	23%	27%	29%

Examples of Intervention-Level Baseline Data

Intervention	Expected Outcome	Relationship to SAI Framework	Special Populations	SAI Baseline Data
1A. Pre-College Math Reform	Increased student support at the onset of developmental education will help encourage persistence and credit completion	Successful completion of developmental courses leads to retention and subsequent attainment of college level milestones	Pre-college math students; male, Hispanic	<p><i>Number of students earning pre-college math point: 2010</i> 1) All: 24%; 2) Male: 20%; 3) Hispanic: 14%</p> <p><i>Number of pre-college students earning college level math point:</i> 1) All: 15%; 2) Male: 12%; 3) Hispanic: 10%</p>
1.B Pre-College English Reform	Increased student support at the onset of developmental education will help encourage persistence and credit completion	Successful completion of developmental courses leads to retention and subsequent attainment of college level milestones	Pre-college English students	<p><i>Number of students earning pre-college English point:</i> 1) All: 41%; 2) Male: 35%; 3) Hispanic: 41%</p> <p><i>Number of pre-college students earning college level English point:</i> 1) All: 49%; 2) Male: 43%; 3) Hispanic: 57%</p>
1.C. K-12 Partnerships	<i>Requires specific SID for tracking; no valid baseline for comparison</i>			
1.D. Math Boot Camps	The extra assistance will allow students to brush up on skills and help them to progress through pre-college more rapidly or re-test at a higher level.	More efficient progression of developmental math students to college level math	Pre-college math students	<p><i>Number of students earning pre-college math point: 2010</i> 1) Students in Math 050 or 078 = <1%</p> <p><i>Number of pre-college students earning college level math point:</i> 1) Students in Math 050 or 078: 3%</p>
2.A. College Success Course	Increased student support at the onset of developmental education will help encourage persistence and credit completion	Successful completion of developmental courses leads to retention and subsequent attainment of college level milestones	New, degree-seeking students	<p><i>Fall to Fall Retention (2009):</i> 1) Full-time 48.1%; 2) Part-time 29.9%</p> <p><i>Percent Earning First 15 in 1st Year:</i> 1) All new in fall (2010): 70%</p> <p><i>Percent Earning First 30 in 1st Year:</i> 1) All new in fall (2010): 38%</p>
2.B. Advising and Orientation Reform	Increased student support at the onset of developmental education will help encourage persistence and credit completion	Successful completion of developmental courses leads to retention and subsequent attainment of college level milestones	All students, focus on new in fall	<p><i>Percent Earning Tipping Point in 4 Years:</i> 1) New in fall (2007): 28.8%; 2) New in fall- Hispanic: 39%</p>

Opportunities & Challenges

Opportunities and challenges include:

- **Institutional change** – AtD colleges have approached institutional change in a variety of ways, reflecting their particular cultures, values, and “personalities.” At Lower Columbia, the approach appears to be both “top down,” with the president and some others in key leadership positions committed to student success, a culture of evidence, and engagement and empowerment of faculty and staff; and “bottom up,” with faculty and staff gathering and analyzing data and information, and planning, developing, and implementing interventions. Some of this precedes AtD. For example, math faculty, seeing that students were not being successful, took the lead in reforming pre-college math. Going forward, it will be important to build on this approach and continue to actively encourage the engagement of key leaders, faculty, and staff.
- **Achievement gaps and equity** – Lower Columbia’s strategic interventions aim to increase student success across income and racial/ethnic lines, but target issues that disproportionately affect target populations such as low income students and Hispanic students. Will this approach close achievement gaps? Or will more targeted interventions be required? Answering these questions will require evaluating the interventions, paying particular attention to their impact on achievement gaps, as is called for in the college’s implementation plan.
- **Pre-college reform** – Lower Columbia’s approach to pre-college reform is comprehensive—including new diagnostic testing, brush up sessions, fewer pre-college levels, a self-paced, modularized curriculum, tutoring and other support—and has as its goals reducing the number of students having to take pre-college courses, increasing the success rate of students who do enroll in pre-college courses and reducing the amount of time it takes for them to move from pre-college to college levels, and increasing the success rate of students who move on to the college level. This comprehensive approach presents a real opportunity to tackle this critical barrier to student success. It will be important to document the approach and evaluate its impact.
- **First year experience** – Several of Lower Columbia’s strategic interventions address students’ experience upon entering college (e.g., college success course, orientation, advising, and math boot camp). Maximizing the impact of the first year experience interventions on student success over time (e.g., the first 15 and 30 college level credits) may require linking these and other interventions together so that they reinforce one another, as is noted in the college’s implementation plan.
- **Student success agenda** – In interviews conducted as part of the baseline assessment with faculty who had not been directly involved in AtD, it was suggested that AtD build on or connect with good work already underway at the college, so that it is a unified effort. One of the things this speaks to is the need for an all-encompassing student success agenda. The college’s implementation plan takes a step in this direction by incorporating its pre-college math and English reforms.
- **Communications** – In those same interviews, most faculty who had not been directly involved in AtD reported having heard about it, but were not familiar with its goals, interventions, or results. One of the things this speaks to is the need for a communications plan.
- **Student engagement** – In a focus group with students, also conducted as part of the baseline assessment, students spoke of the importance of student engagement to student success. Part of this is faculty-student engagement in the classroom, an issue addressed by one of Lower Columbia’s strategic interventions. But, it also includes engagement with faculty outside of the classroom, as well as with other students (i.e., peer mentoring) and staff. The college’s diversity and equity center may help address these other aspects of engagement.