

### Introduction

The Achieving the Dream initiative defines gatekeeper courses as *first level curricular courses that students must pass before enrolling in more advanced courses in their major field*. The Academic Affairs Office designated the following as CCP gatekeeper courses: Math 017, Math 118, English 098, English 101, Biology 106, and Computer Information Science 103.

This Fact Sheet examines student engagement associated with the five benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges that are part of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) which was administered during the Spring 2009 semester. Descriptions of the benchmarks are available in IR Report #189, titled *Community College Survey of Students Engagement Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice*. Average scores on the five benchmarks, which appear in Table 1, are presented separately for students who completed the CCSSE survey in a gatekeeper or non-gatekeeper course. Higher benchmark scores indicate greater levels of engagement. The information in the column titled *Mean Group Differences* reflects the disparity between average group scores.

**Table 1: Benchmark Score Associated With Students in Gatekeeper and Non-Gatekeeper Courses in the Spring 2009 Semester**

Benchmark	Gatekeeper Average	Non-Gatekeeper Average	Mean Group Difference	Statistically Significant Difference
Active and Collaborative Learning	48.19	50.12	-1.94	No
Student Effort	60.53	53.65	6.88	Yes
Academic Challenge	58.55	54.86	3.69	No
Student-Faculty Interaction	52.69	52.60	0.09	No
Support for Learners	56.97	51.13	5.84	Yes

Statistically significant group differences emerged in two areas: 1) Student Effort and 2) Support for Learners. Students who completed the CCSSE survey in a gatekeeper course expended significantly greater levels of effort and experienced significantly more support than students who completed the survey in non-gatekeeper courses.

Eight items contribute to the Student Effort benchmark (Table 2) and seven items contribute to the Support for Learners benchmark (Table 3). As a group, students in gatekeeper courses indicated greater levels of engagement than students in non-gatekeeper courses across most of the survey items that comprise the benchmarks.

### Student Effort and Support for Learners Benchmark Items

Table 2: CCSSE Items That Comprise the Student Effort Benchmark	Gatekeeper Average	Non-Gatekeeper Average	Mean Group Difference	Statistically Significant Difference
4c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	2.75	2.59	.16	No
4d. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	2.92	2.82	.10	No
4e. Came to class without completing readings or assignments	1.84	1.80	.04	No
6b. Number of books read on your own for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	2.41	2.23	.18	No
10a. Prepared for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework)	2.03	1.99	.04	No
13d1. Frequency: Peer or other tutoring	1.44	1.15	.29	Yes
13e1. Frequency: Skill labs (writing, math etc.)	1.50	1.24	.25	Yes
13h1. . . Frequency: Computer lab	2.08	2.01	.07	No

Table 3: CCSSE Items That Comprise the Support for Learners Benchmark	Gatekeeper Average	Non-Gatekeeper Average	Mean Group Difference	Statistically Significant Difference
9b. Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college	3.10	2.86	.24	Yes
9c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial backgrounds	2.70	2.61	.09	No
9d. Helping you cope with you non-academic responsibilities	2.08	1.95	.13	No
9e. Providing you with the support you need to thrive socially	2.33	2.15	.18	Yes
9f. Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	2.80	2.47	.33	Yes
13a. Frequency: Academic advising/planning	1.74	1.68	.06	No
13a. Frequency: Career counseling	1.24	1.15	.09	No

Response Scale for Survey Interns					
Question 4:	1=Never	2= Sometimes	3= Often	4= Very Often	
Question 6:	1= 1-4 books/papers	2= 5-10 books/papers	3= 11-20 books/papers	4= 20+ books/papers	
Question 9:	1=Never	2= Sometimes	3= Often	4= Very Often	
Question 10:	1= 1-4	2= 5-10	3= 11-20	4= 21 –30	5= 30+
Question 13:	0= Don't Know	1 = Never / Rarely	2 = Sometimes	3 = Often	