



# Annual Narrative & Financial Report

## Rounds I, II, III & IV Institutions

### *Due April 30, 2009*

#### **Preparing Your Report**

The annual report provides an opportunity to reflect on your 2008-09 Achieving the Dream work and to plan for the coming year. We encourage you to hold a series of team meetings or a retreat (with your coach and data facilitator, if possible) to discuss your progress and the challenges you have faced during the past year. Use the tenets of the Achieving the Dream model—committed leadership, use of evidence to improve programs and services, broad engagement, and systemic institutional improvement—to guide your discussions. For your reference, an excerpt from the Achieving the Dream Framework for Institutional Improvement has been included with these report guidelines as Attachment A.

In writing your report, you should assume the reader will *not* have prior knowledge about your institution's Achieving the Dream work. Your report will convey your progress most effectively if you briefly describe each intervention referenced and spell out acronyms that are unique to your institution or state. This report should cover your activities from May 2008 through April 2009.

Please note:

- All participating institutions, including self-funded sites, should submit a complete narrative and financial report
- Maximum length of narrative (sections I-V): 12 pages, double-spaced
- Interventions to Improve Student Success Online Tool: To fulfill compliance requirements, all colleges are required to upload current intervention descriptions and available evaluation data to the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool* on the Achieving the Dream web site in conjunction with annual report submission; data for the Fall 2008 term must be entered by April 30, 2009; data from the Spring 2009 term must be entered by July 31, 2009
- All colleges should submit an updated contact list; see Appendix B

#### **ATTENTION: Round I and Ohio Colleges**

- If you are applying for designation as an Achieving the Dream Leader College, "Section IV: Systemic Institutional Improvement. Item 2. Detailed Intervention Description" of the annual report narrative will serve as your application documentation. *You will not need to make a duplicate submission.* For more instructions on completing this section, please see "Process for Identifying Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges Among Round I and Ohio Institutions."

- If you have more than \$1000 of your grant funds remaining and would like to obtain permission to continue spending these funds through FY 2009-2010, please submit a letter, as a separate PDF file, with your annual report requesting a no-cost extension. If you do not request or receive a no-cost extension, you must remit all remaining funds to the granting institution. See “Section VI: Interim Annual Financial Report” for further instructions.

### Submitting Your Report

- Reports are due April 30, 2009 by email to [atd@mdcinc.org](mailto:atd@mdcinc.org). Please include the words “ATD Annual Report” in the subject line.
- Please submit the report narrative and any related attachments as a single PDF file. Your budget and updated contact list should be submitted as Excel files.
  - Please use the following naming convention for your *narrative*:

**COLLEGE NAME\_2009 Annual Report\_DATE OF SUBMISSION**

- Please use the following naming convention for your *budget*:

**COLLEGE NAME\_2009 Annual Report Budget\_DATE OF SUBMISSION**

- **Round 1 and Ohio Colleges:** If you are requesting a no-cost extension, your letter should be submitted as a separate PDF file.
- The information you provide on the annual report helps us identify trends, successes, and challenges that occur across the initiative. In order for us to have accurate information and to share that information with colleges and other partners, it is imperative that your responses are standardized and complete. **Please do not modify the format or questions of the report guidelines.** Fill in all of the appropriate checkboxes and tables and respond to the questions as written. Colleges that disregard the reporting guidelines will be asked to resubmit their report.

### Questions?

Email [atd@mdcinc.org](mailto:atd@mdcinc.org). Please include the words “ATD Annual Report” in the subject line.

Colleges making satisfactory progress will receive 2009-10 annual grants this summer. CollegeSpark Washington expects to make grants in August. Other Achieving the Dream funders will make grants by July 1.

Thank you. We look forward to reading your report!

*The MDC Achieving the Dream staff*

# Achieving the Dream

## Annual Narrative & Financial Report: April 2009

**Name of Institution:** Springfield Technical Community College

**Date:** April, 2009

**Achieving the Dream Funder (if applicable):**

**Grant Number (if applicable):**

### Report submitted by:

Name: Stephen Keller & Patrick Tigue

Title: VP Academic Affairs & VP Student Affairs

Phone: 413-755-4440 & 413-755-4482

Email: [Keller@stcc.edu](mailto:Keller@stcc.edu) & [tigue@stcc.edu](mailto:tigue@stcc.edu)

## I. Committed Leadership

a. How have the **president, chancellor, and/or campus CEO** participated in your Achieving the Dream work this year? Check all that apply.

Participated actively on the Achieving the Dream Core Team or equivalent working group

Regularly monitored the college's Achieving the Dream work

Made presentations about Achieving the Dream issues to:

faculty & staff

community groups

trustees

Other. Please describe: **Our President has personally assumed the responsibility for leading the community engagement component of our ATD initiative. This has resulted in initial community conversations that are not only substantial in their own right but also serve as a strong signal to our campus community relative to the depth of the President's commitment to the entire ATD initiative. The discussions that have taken place with various community constituencies ( e.g. government officials, social service agencies, K-12 school**

officials, area clergy, non-profit agencies, civic organizations, local employers) have been very positive and meaningful. It is our belief that these various discussions will serve as a strong foundation for our continuing efforts in this area. Additionally, the President attended this year's Achieving the Dream national strategy institute in San Francisco as a member of our institutional contingent.

B. In what other ways has your institution shared information and lessons from your Achieving the Dream work and the student success agenda this year? Check all that apply.

- Web site
- Regular reports to trustees
- Regular reports to faculty and staff
- Regular reports to students
- Special Achieving the Dream reports
- On-campus Achieving the Dream events
- Other. Please describe:

## II. Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services

### *IT and IR Capacity*

- a. Number of FTEs at your institution devoted to institutional research: 3
- b. Has your institution upgraded its *institutional research* capacity this year?
  - No
  - Yes

If yes, briefly describe the changes and their impact on the college: **A full-time SAS programmer was hired in the Office of Institutional Research to assist with data extraction and data file assembly as preparation for our various data analysis activities. This position has been a positive addition to our institutional research capacity since our part-time statistical analyst in the I.R Office retired after twenty-five years of service. Additionally, the College sent the entire IR staff to an SAS training conference. The College has also**

**employed Visual Foxpro and Safari to conduct preliminary data analysis.**

c. Number of FTEs at your institution devoted to information technology: **17**

d. Has your institution upgraded its *information technology* capacity this year?

No

Yes

If yes, briefly describe the changes and their impact on the college: **The process for investigating the transition from our Unidata system to a relational database has continued throughout the current year. Our initial attempt to create an internal data warehouse proved unsuccessful. We are presently reviewing a Datatel product to create an operational data store (ODS) that will allow us to conduct the necessary data extraction and analysis for our ATD efforts as we move forward.**

**A new wireless access controller was purchased, to assist IT staff to better manage wireless on campus. This will also allow students to connect wireless on campus. There has been open wireless on campus prior to this but these areas were not secured. This new controller, with new access points, will allow the IT Staff to grant access and monitor who is logging in. Secondly, bandwidth was increased in October, 2008 to 30 mbps. Although the need for bandwidth will always be increasing, this 50% increase has helped. Lastly, the the IT staff has begun distributing software changes directly to the campus community allowing them to complete updates of their PC's without direct IT Staff appointments/ involvement. Adobe Acrobat, Flash, Datatel, are some of the upgrades that have been pushed out to the general community.**

e. How has your institution used data in institutional decision making this year? Check all that apply.

Program review and evaluation

Strategic planning

Budget preparation

Briefly describe your practices and their impact to date: **Our annual program review and professional accreditation processes were informed by data gathered as a result of our Achieving the Dream efforts. Our recently initiated strategic planning process is utilizing a qualitative data research methodology, Appreciative Inquiry, that has fully engaged the core planning team. Appreciative Inquiry or “AI” is a strengths-based, organizational capacity building technique. AI involves the use of interviews to generate qualitative data focusing on organizational strengths and then building on those strengths. AI also incorporates a focus on the process of conducting qualitative research as a means to achieving a greater understanding of broad organizational goals as well as increased individual engagement in support of these goals. There has also been substantial use of quantitative data by our institutional budget team as they have been required to develop several FY2010 budget scenarios while contemplating reductions in state support, possible student fee increases, and potential federal stimulus funds. At the departmental level, student course success data has been used in both the Biology and Business departments to inform changes to course prerequisites and course sequences within curricula.**

f. What institutional research challenges has the college faced this year? Check all that apply.

- None
- Too few IR staff positions
- Unfilled staff positions
- IR staff skill deficits
- Difficulty retrieving useful, timely data
- Other. Please describe: **One significant challenge has been coming to understand the working relationship between the offices of IR and IT as it relates to our ability to collect and analyze data.**

g. Has the institution analyzed longitudinal/student cohort data this year?

- No
- Yes, and this use of data pre-dates Achieving the Dream

Yes, and we began this use of data after joining Achieving the Dream

If yes, what data did you use and how did you use it?

If no, please explain why: **In response to a suggestion from our Coach and Data Facilitator, we utilized longitudinal data to develop a scorecard to assess institutional progress on the five main ATD key performance indicators e.g. completion of developmental courses, completion of gatekeeper courses, etc.**

h. Did the institution use data from the Achieving the Dream database to conduct these analyses?

No

Yes

If no, please explain why: **We were able to use existing institutional longitudinal data files to conduct the analyses noted in item “g” above.**

### *Process for Identifying Achievement Gaps*

i. Have you looked at any data this year to diagnose achievement gaps among groups of students?

No

Yes

If yes, what data did you use? How did you use this analysis to develop and refine your intervention strategies? **We have recently begun a review of outcomes from our Fall 2008 pilot interventions and examined data relative to the primary goals of each pilot. This has involved looking at data on course pass rates for two of our interventions (Developmental Math & College Success Seminar) and fall-to-spring retention rate for the remaining pilot strategy (Intrusive Advising). We have created task forces to make recommendations for Fall 2009 refinements in the Developmental Math and College Success Seminar pilots. We have convened an Academic Advising task force to examine our college-wide academic advising practices and offer recommendations for improvement.**

If no, please explain why:

## *Process for Formulating and Evaluating Solutions*

j. What is the current status of your evaluation?

- Evaluation is still being designed
- We have collected some early data
- We have collected and analyzed 1-2 semesters of data
- We have collected and analyzed 3 or more semesters of data

k. What obstacles (if any) have you faced in designing or conducting the evaluation?

How are you addressing these obstacles? **We have discovered that the logistics of data input, extraction, analysis and reporting are very challenging due to long-term past practices in both our IT and IR departments. We are now conducting a review of the alignment of IR/IT functions, staffing and operations in an effort to improve our capacity to access and analyze student outcomes data to better support evaluation and planning. We are currently projecting that this review and an action plan to address the identified issues will be completed during the Fall 2009 semester. It will be challenging to move forward with evaluation activities in a more sophisticated manner until these issues are addressed.**

## III. Broad Engagement

### *Faculty and Staff*

a. In what ways have *full-time faculty* been actively engaged in your Achieving the Dream efforts this year?

- Provided oversight or coordination of Achieving the Dream interventions
- Designed new student success initiatives
- Participated in focus groups related to Achieving the Dream interventions
- Participated in regular discussions related to Achieving the Dream interventions
- Participated in professional development to further student success
- Participated in data collection and/or analysis
- Other. Please describe: **At an August , 2008 Professional Day dedicated to “Developing a Culture of Evidence,” several full-time faculty (and staff)**

**presented their own efforts to use student achievement data to improve student outcomes. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Richard Light, Director of the Harvard Assessment Seminars, addressed the faculty on the potential of using qualitative data for assessment.**

- b. In what ways have *part-time or adjunct faculty* been actively engaged in your Achieving the Dream efforts this year?
- Provided oversight or coordination of Achieving the Dream interventions
  - Designed new student success initiatives
  - Participated in focus groups related to Achieving the Dream interventions
  - Participated in regular discussions related to Achieving the Dream interventions
  - Participated in professional development to further student success
  - Participated in data collection and/or analysis
  - Other. Please describe:
- c. In what ways have *staff* been actively engaged in your Achieving the Dream efforts this year?
- Provided oversight or coordination of Achieving the Dream interventions
  - Designed new student success interventions
  - Participated in focus groups related to Achieving the Dream interventions
  - Participated in regular discussions related to Achieving the Dream interventions
  - Participated in professional development to further student success
  - Participated in data collection and/or analysis
  - Other. Please describe: **See item a, above.**

### *Students and External Stakeholders*

- d. How have you involved *students* in your work this year?
- Surveys  
Please list surveys conducted:
  - Focus groups  
Please describe: **Student focus groups have been conducted. Qualitative feedback on college-wide academic advising practices as well as student**

**experiences in our College Success Seminar course were discussed. The analysis of this qualitative data has just begun.**

Students participated on planning or advisory committees

Please describe:

Other. Please describe:

e. How have you involved the *external community* this year?

K-14 collaboration

Please describe: **Our President and Vice President for Enrollment Management/Student Affairs conducted joint visits to most of STCC's major feeder high schools during the Fall of 2008 and discussed the ATD initiative with the high school Principals.**

Community Conversations, following Public Agenda model

Community forums or meetings

Please describe: **We have conducted a series of meetings with members of the clergy of all faiths from the Greater Springfield area. Our goal has been to provide them an overview of Achieving the Dream and request their assistance and engagement in promoting college readiness among potential students and supporting college success of currently enrolled STCC students.**

Other. Please describe: **We have also held a breakfast meeting for community leaders in the human and social services field to introduce the Achieving the Dream initiative and solicit their support.**

f. How have you shared information and lessons with external audiences?

Conference presentations

Please list conferences: **Massachusetts Statewide Summit on College Preparedness**

Presentations to community groups

Press releases

Scholarly articles disseminated statewide or nationally

Other. Please describe: **Discussions about the ATD initiative were held with community groups such as the Regional Employment Board, the Martin Luther**

**King Center, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Springfield Schools, Black Men of Greater Springfield, et.al.**

g. Was your institution's Achieving the Dream work mentioned or featured in a local or nation print or electronic media story?

No

Yes

If yes, please provide the reference. This may include web site links or URLs, the dates and pages on which stories were published in specific magazines, newspapers, or other publications and/or the dates stories were aired on specific radio or television stations. Please include items published periodically, monthly, or weekly as well as daily and community, neighborhood, city/town, regional, and state media outlets.

## IV. Systemic Institutional Improvement

### *Institutional Management*

**Item 1. Progress in Implementing Proposed Interventions.** Consult the most current version of your work plan to complete the following table. For each proposed intervention, indicate whether the intervention has been:

- **I:** Implemented as planned
- **D:** Delayed
- **M:** Modified
- **C:** Cancelled
- **S:** Taken to scale
- **OT:** Uploaded, with evaluative data, to the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool*

You may add cells as necessary.

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>OT</b>
Academic Advising	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Developmental Mathematics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
College Success Seminar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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b. What obstacles have you faced this year in implementing planned strategies and interventions? How have you addressed these challenges?

**One full-time academic advisor resigned from our intrusive advising initiative in August of 2008 and we were unable to fill the position due to state budget reversions. Although we were able to maintain our proposed student caseload of 400 students for the Fall 2008 semester, we did have to reduce the students served by the intrusive advising strategy in Spring 2009 from 400 to 275. We experienced some difficulty in identifying participants with the desired academic profile for our college success course pilot. We will have the time this year to plan and monitor the appropriate placement of these students during our summer “1-STOP” enrollment process. The Math initiative was complicated by the fact that faculty instituted several strategies simultaneously which decreased the sample size and complicated the outcomes analysis.**

c. What changes do you propose for next year? Why do you believe the proposed changes will produce better results? **The Math initiative will be limited to fewer strategies which we believe will allow us more clearly identify their impact on student success. We are also reviewing the College Success Seminar target population and course objectives for possible revision in the future.**

## **Item 2. Detailed Intervention Description.**

- *ALL colleges are required to complete this section.*
- **Note to Round I and Ohio colleges:** If you are applying for designation as an ATD Leader College, please check the box below. The detailed intervention description will serve as your application documentation. For more information about this process, please see “Process for Identifying Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges Among Round I and Ohio Institutions.”

Our institution is applying for designation as an ATD Leader College.

- a. Present credible evidence of increases in student achievement on at least one of the central Achieving the Dream measures during three or more years<sup>1</sup>:
- Course completion
  - Advancement from remedial to credit-bearing courses
  - Completion of college-level “gatekeeper” math and English courses
  - Term-to-term and year-to-year retention
  - Completion of certificates or degrees

Alternatively, you may provide student success data on other measures relevant to the specific student success interventions undertaken. The documentation of increases in student achievement should be in an area where your institution has sought to improve overall student success or close gaps in achievement among student groups.

You are encouraged to present data on increases in the *rates* of student success as well as the *absolute numbers* of students succeeding, since the latter can be affected by changes in enrollment rather than in student performance.

**The following line graphs present data that describes our first semester outcomes on the primary measures proposed for each of our student success intervention strategies. Five-year longitudinal data is presented for each student success measure on each strategy including data for the Fall 2008 initial pilot semester. Graph #1 indicates that the College Success Seminar strategy may have contributed to a small (2%) one-semester improvement in the developmental course pass rate of the overall cohort of Fall 2008 students who placed in the three core developmental areas of Reading, Writing and Math. (Please note that Graph #1 indicates that the students in this strategy**

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<sup>1</sup> While at least three years of data are required for Round I and Ohio institutions' applications for ATD Leader College designation, all other institutions should base their documentation on Achieving the Dream work completed thus far.

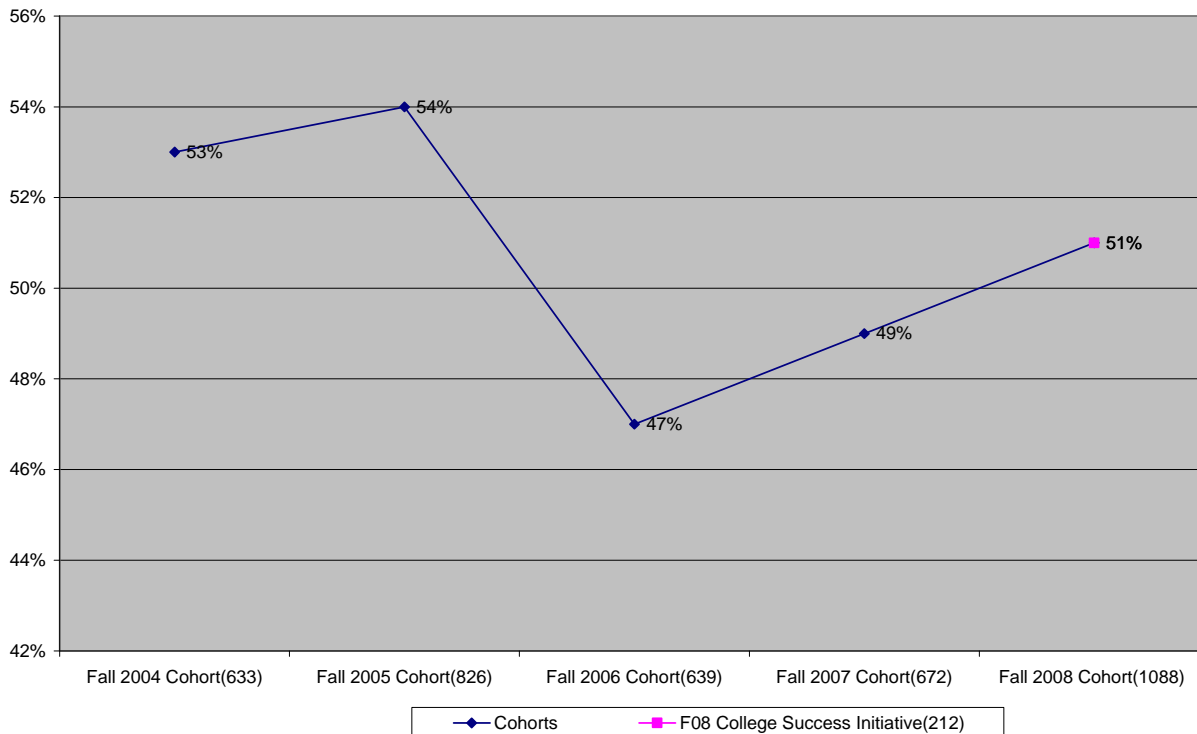
achieved the same developmental course pass rate (51%) as the overall Fall 2008 cohort).

Graph #2 indicates that our Fall-To-Spring Retention of overall General Studies Developmental Students remained flat at 70% while showing higher rates of success for the students targeted by the Intrusive Advising initiative. More specifically, 265 of 368 developmental general studies students receiving intrusive advising, or 72%, persisted from Fall 2008 to Spring 2009 as compared to 494 of 707, or 70%, of the overall Fall 2008 general studies developmental students.

Lastly, while Graph #3 shows that the overall Fall 2008 cohort developmental math course pass rate declined from the previous year by 4%, the positive news is that 56% or 177 of the 318 students in the developmental math initiative passed their developmental math course as compared to the 52% or 562 of the 1081 overall cohort enrolled in developmental math in Fall 2008.

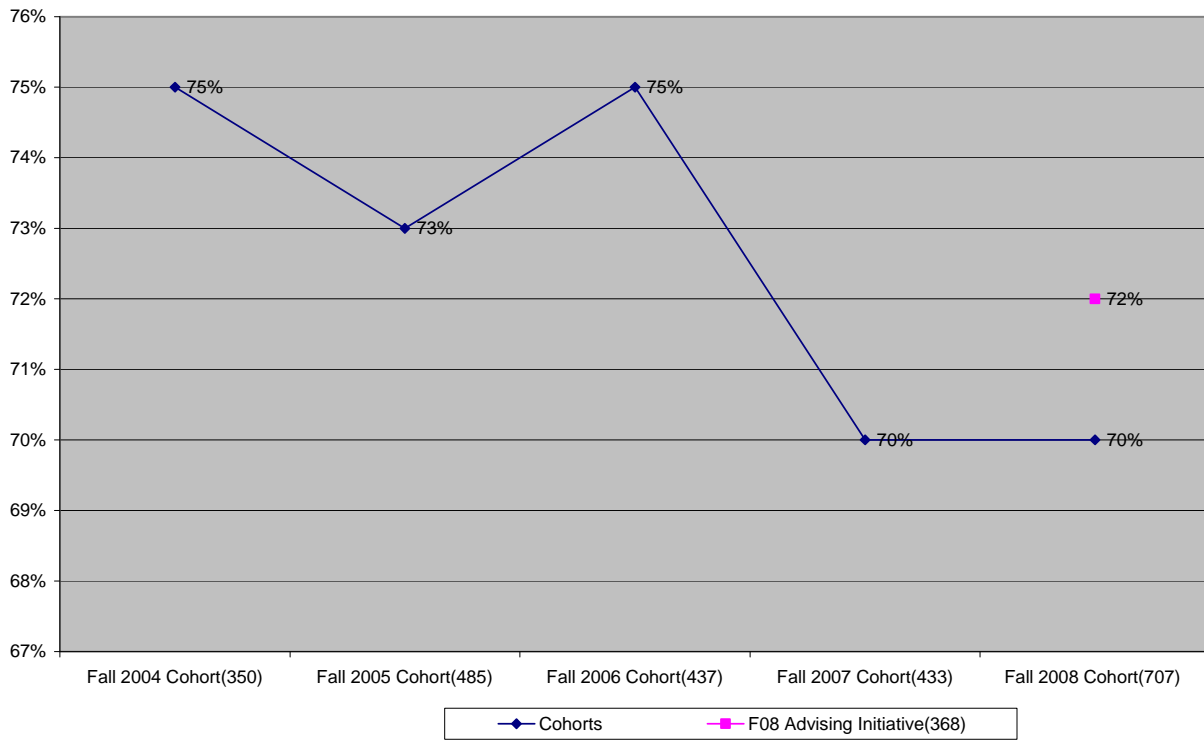
### GRAPH 1-DEVELOPMENTAL COURSE PASS RATES

Dev.Success Rates-Students w/3 Dev.Placements

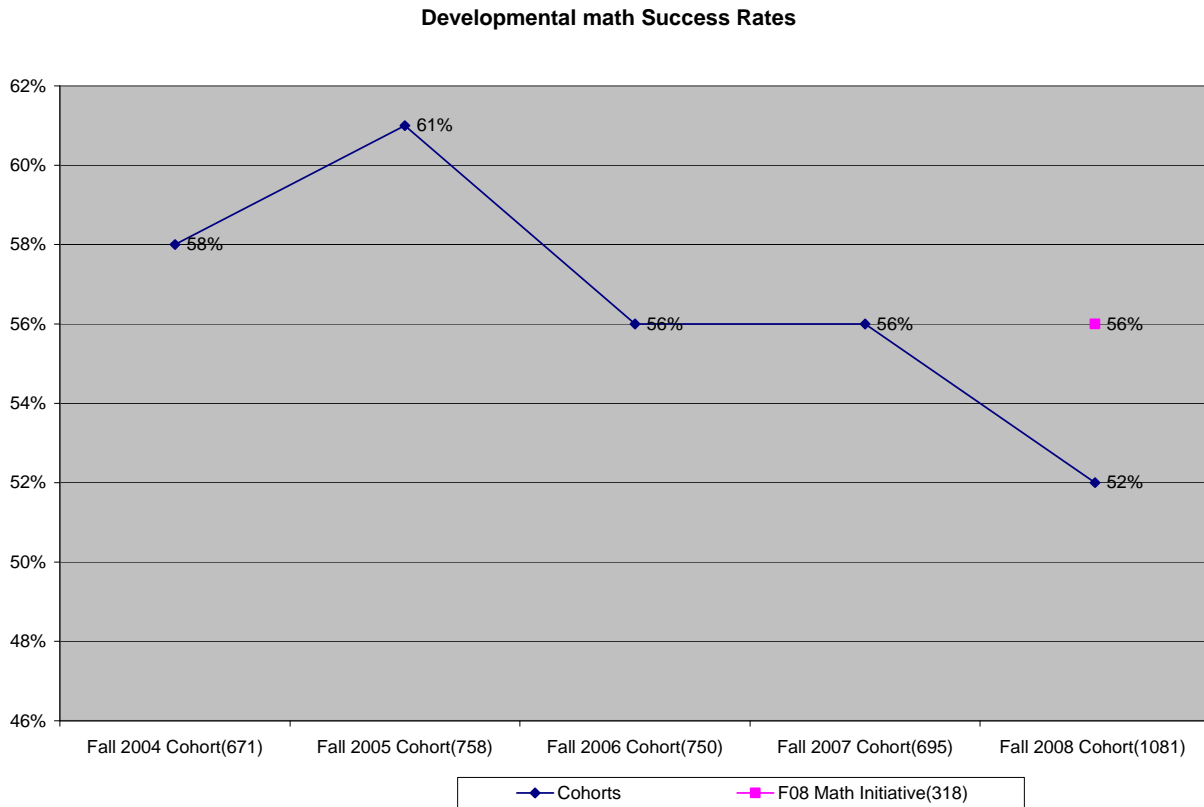


## GRAPH 2- FALL-TO-SPRING RETENTION

### Developmental General Studies Retention Rates



### GRAPH 3- DEVELOPMENTAL MATH PASS RATES



b. Provide a brief description of at least one intervention you have implemented to achieve the documented improvement in student outcomes. The intervention(s) described should be of a sufficient scale to benefit a substantial proportion of the target population. **Our Intrusive Advising pilot intervention was first implemented in the Fall 2008 semester. Transforming the advising process was the number one issue identified by faculty and professional staff whenever strategic discussions were**

held during our planning year. Intrusive advising involves proactive intervention with at-risk students by professional advisors. Utilizing best practices developed by our Student Support Services (SSS) Program, our strategy has begun to expand the reach of academic advising and increase student contact with advisors among the target population of first semester, general studies, developmental students. This was accomplished by a newly created core academic advising unit consisting of a full-time Director, 1 full-time professional staff academic advisor, and two additional half-time advisors. A total of 368 developmental general studies students were served by these advisors in the Fall 2008 pilot intervention. The advising model that was implemented by the staff in this unit incorporates a holistic and intrusive approach that addresses all of the generally recognized key elements for student success including transition to college, substantial engagement and regular communication with ongoing support and mentoring, connection with all available and appropriate campus support resources, career and educational goal development, and appropriate course selection.

**Item 3. Uploading data to the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool*.** To fulfill compliance requirements, all colleges are required to upload current intervention descriptions and available evaluation data to the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool* in conjunction with annual report submission. Data for the Fall 2008 term must be entered by April 30, 2009. Data from the Spring 2009 term must be entered by July 31, 2009.

- We certify that intervention descriptions and evaluation data for the Fall 2008 term are uploaded and up-to-date in the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool*.

**Item 4. Institutional Policies, Planning, and Funding.**

- a. Have you aligned and integrated your Achieving the Dream work with core activities, processes, and policies of the institution this year?

No

Yes

If yes, please describe: **As a Round 4 institution completing our first year with a primary focus on strategy implementation, we are just beginning discussions regarding the broader ATD agenda as it speaks to institutional transformation and integration of ATD principles into core activities, processes, policies. In sections b and c that follow, there is description of our efforts thus far regarding use of Achieving the Dream principles with strategic planning as well as in preparation for regional accreditation. Additionally, section d below documents a substantial commitment of institutional funds for ATD activities that is projected to continue in subsequent years.**

b. Have you aligned and integrated your Achieving the Dream work with campus-wide strategic planning processes?

No

Yes

If yes, please describe: **We have begun a new strategic planning process during the Spring 2009 semester utilizing an “appreciative inquiry” or strengths-based qualitative data approach to planning and organizational capacity-building. Two of the four main themes serving as the framework for our strategic planning approach are drawn directly from our Achieving the Dream work: “Inspiring Student Success” and “Partnering with the Community”. This will insure that the major strategic priorities of the institution moving forward will be driven in large part by the goals of our Achieving the Dream initiative.**

c. Have you aligned and integrated your Achieving the Dream work with on-going accreditation activities?

No

Yes

If yes, please describe: **The preparation for STCC’s Spring 2011 accreditation has recently begun with the formation of campus committees to conduct the required self-study activities and develop the data and narrative reports required by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The revised NEASC standards now include a discrete institutional effectiveness component for each individual standard. We will use our Achieving the Dream work to demonstrate substantial evidence of systematic data gathering and analysis that is used to develop strategies to improve student academic achievement and evaluate their effectiveness. We will also continue to integrate ATD work with our ongoing processes to meet the requirements of external professional accrediting agencies (e.g. NLN, ABET, etc.)**

d. Have additional *institutional* financial resources been committed toward Achieving the Dream interventions this year?

No

Yes

If yes, please complete the following table. You may add additional cells as necessary.

<b>Source of funds</b>	<b>Approx. \$ amount</b>	<b>Which interventions are these resources supporting?</b>
<b>College budget</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>Intrusive Advising, Developmental Math, College Success Seminar</b>

e. Have additional *external* financial resources been committed toward Achieving the Dream interventions this year?

No

Yes

If yes, please complete the following table. You may add additional cells as necessary.

<b>Source of funds</b>	<b>Approx. \$ amount</b>	<b>Which interventions are these resources supporting?</b>

## *Organization*

a. Which standing committees or committees at your institution are responsible for guiding and monitoring Achieving the Dream and other efforts to improve student outcomes?

Achieving the Dream Core Team

Achieving the Dream Data Team

Other. Please describe: **We have formed two college-wide task forces. One on Academic Advising with the three-part charge of assessing current academic advising practices at STCC, gathering data on national best practices, and developing a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve our academic advising model. Another task force is reviewing the content, curriculum, and scalability of the College Success Seminar and will also develop recommendations. The target date for completion of all of these recommendations is September 1, 2009.**

## *Professional Development*

a. What kinds of professional development opportunities did you provide for faculty and staff to reinforce student success efforts?

On-campus training on using data and research to improve programs and services

Off-site training on using data and research to improve programs and services

Induction and orientation activities for new faculty and staff that include an introduction to the student success agenda

Other. Please describe: **The College served as a host site for an Appreciate Inquiry facilitator training program in the Fall of 2008 conducted by Company of Experts. Twelve STCC faculty/staff received AI training at this event. A contingent of eight STCC faculty/staff attended the National ATD 2009 Strategy Institute in san Francisco.**

## V. Summary of Accomplishments and Disappointments

- a. Briefly describe your greatest accomplishment this year. In retrospect, we are very pleased that we were able to fully implement our three proposed student success strategies in the Fall semester of Year 1 and begin analysis of preliminary outcomes data for each of these strategies early in the current Spring semester of Year 1. **Our ATD Coach and Data Facilitator have informed us that not all schools are able to meet this timetable in their first year. Moreover, our coaches have noted that our level of community engagement is even more atypical in Year 1 and even beyond Year 1 for a great many ATD schools.**
- b. Briefly describe your greatest disappointment or setback (if any) this year? **There is nothing of such consequence that could be accurately described as a “disappointment” or “setback” because we feel we have made substantial progress as noted above. However, we would have liked to have devoted more time discussing and planning how to work on the institutional transformation agenda in a more substantive way. Conversely, this would have been time diverted from strategy implementation and community engagement.**
- c. Is there anything else you would like MDC or your funder (if applicable) to know about your work this year? **In spite of the many challenges involved with initial implementation of an initiative of this magnitude, we are genuinely appreciative of the continuing commitment of the faculty and staff. They have demonstrated energy and enthusiasm above and beyond the call of duty. The assistance and guidance provided by our coach and data facilitator have also been invaluable in helping us move this initiative forward.**

## VI. Annual Interim Financial Report

Please use your *most recent budget approved by MDC* as the basis for your annual interim financial report. If you need help identifying your institution's most recently approved budget or in preparing your 2009 submission, contact Elizabeth Muller Busta at [ebusta@mdcinc.org](mailto:ebusta@mdcinc.org) early in your preparations.

On the most recently approved budget, add a column for expenses through March 31<sup>st</sup> to the right of this year's column. List this year's expenses through March 31<sup>st</sup> in this new column. Unused funds from this year may be carried forward to next year without requesting approval, if they remain in the same line items.

If you need to reallocate carryover funds and/or future funds, MDC must approve a budget modification. If you need to request a budget modification, contact Elizabeth Muller Busta at [ebusta@mdcinc.org](mailto:ebusta@mdcinc.org).

**Note to Round 1 and Ohio Colleges:** If you have more than \$1000 of your grant funds remaining and would like to obtain permission to continue spending these funds through FY 2009-2010, please submit a letter, as a separate PDF file, along with your annual report requesting a no-cost extension. If you do not request or receive a no-cost extension, you must remit all remaining funds to the granting institution. If you have questions regarding this process please contact Elizabeth Muller Busta at [ebusta@mdcinc.org](mailto:ebusta@mdcinc.org).



## Appendix A: Excerpt from “A Framework for Improving Student Outcomes and Institutional Performance”

VERSION 2.3  
REVISED NOVEMBER 2007

**Acknowledgements:** This document is based on the Achieving the Dream *Framing Paper* and *Integrated Action Plan*, which present the conceptual foundations for the initiative, as well as on numerous discussions among the national partners to the initiative and with participating colleges. It also draws from the *Community College Inventory: Focus on Student Persistence, Learning and Attainment* by Byron and Kay McClenney. It was developed by the Community College Research Center and was reviewed by the Achieving the Dream partners, coaches, data coaches and colleges. Funding was generously provided by Lumina Foundation for Education. For more information on Achieving the Dream, see [www.achievingthedream.org](http://www.achievingthedream.org). For questions or comments on this framework, contact Davis Jenkins, senior research associate, Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, at [djenkins@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:djenkins@tc.columbia.edu).

## **Achieving the Dream *Principles of Institutional Improvement***

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The Achieving the Dream model of institutional performance improvement has four principles:

**Committed leadership.** The *Framing Paper* for the initiative states that presidential leadership “is essential to bring about institutional change that will improve student outcomes. The president or chancellor must have a vision for student success and equity and must be able to mobilize broad support for that vision throughout the college and community” (p. 11). The college’s board and faculty leadership also need to support an agenda for improving student outcomes.

**Use of evidence to improve programs and services.** The *Integrated Action Plan* (IAP) states that: “Achieving the Dream is data-driven and outcomes-driven. Colleges will cultivate the practice of using data to drive their decision-making, program evaluation and resource allocation” (p. 12). Decisions about how to organize, manage and fund instruction and student support services should be made based on evidence of what works to facilitate student success.

**Broad engagement.** While strong leadership from the top is necessary to change an organization, it is not sufficient. “To tackle an issue as important and complex as improving student success, a college must engage faculty, staff and administrators throughout the institution. Colleges should also seek input from students and the larger community” (*Framing Paper*, p. 9). Achieving the Dream recognizes that to bring about lasting change, “the behavior of people across the institution must change” (*Ibid*). Yet, simply securing input from faculty and staff is not enough. Institutions should encourage faculty and staff to take responsibility for student success and invite them to take the lead in efforts to improve the effectiveness of their programs and services. Working collaboratively to enhance student success can be a powerful form of professional development for faculty and staff.

**Systemic institutional improvement.** Achieving the Dream seeks to help colleges bring about changes that go beyond specific programmatic interventions and affect the culture and strategic operation of the institution. According to the IAP, participating institutions “will make significant and continuing changes in policies, budgetary and organizational structures, programs, and services to improve student outcomes” (p. 6). Institutionalizing a process of continuous, systemic improvement requires a commitment to reallocating resources (financial, human, etc.) in support of policies and practices found to be effective in improving student success.

Achieving the Dream believes that by following these principles, colleges will be able to build a “culture of inquiry and evidence” that will support continuous improvements in student success.

## **Achieving the Dream *Process* of Institutional Improvement**

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The initiative recommends that colleges implement the principles of institutional improvement through a five-step process.

**Step 1: Commit to improving student outcomes.** The college's senior leadership, with support from the board of trustees and faculty leaders, commits to making the changes in policy and resource allocation necessary to improve student outcomes, and organizes a team to oversee the process.

**Step 2: Identify and prioritize problems.** The college uses longitudinal student cohort data and other evidence to identify gaps in student achievement. A key premise of this approach is that once faculty and staff see that certain groups of students are not doing as well as others, they will be motivated to address barriers to student success. To ensure that they focus their resources to greatest effect, colleges are encouraged to prioritize the student achievement problems they plan to address.

**Step 3: Engage stakeholders in developing strategies for addressing priority problems.** The college engages faculty, staff and other internal and external stakeholders in developing strategies for remedying priority problems with student achievement based on a diagnosis of the causes and an evaluation of the effectiveness of previous attempts by the institution and others to address such problems.

**Step 4: Implement, evaluate and improve strategies.** The college then implements the strategies for addressing priority problems, being sure to evaluate the outcomes and using the results to make further improvements.

**Step 5: Institutionalize effective policies and practices.** The college takes steps to institutionalize effective policies and practices. Particular attention is placed on how resources are allocated to bring to scale and sustain proven strategies, and on how program review, planning, and budgeting are driven by evidence of what works best for students.

Colleges should continually repeat this process to bring about on-going improvements in student success over time.

## Achieving the Dream *Indicators of Institutional Improvement*

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The institutions participating in Achieving the Dream are required to submit to a common database longitudinal unit record data on cohorts of students that will be used to measure progress on five indicators over at least four years. The five indicators are the rates at which an institution's students:

- 1) Complete college remedial or "developmental" courses;
- 2) Complete "gatekeeper" courses, particularly the first college-level or degree-credit courses in math and English;
- 3) Successfully complete the courses they attempt;
- 4) Persist from term to term and year to year; and
- 5) Complete credentials.

Achieving the Dream expects that by the following its model of institutional improvement, participating institutions will be able to increase the rates at which their students succeed on the five indicators and close any substantial gaps in performance on the indicators among different groups of students by race and ethnicity, income or other characteristics.

The following table presents specific measures for each indicator. All of these measures are based on outcomes over a given time period (for example, three years) for cohorts of first-time, degree-seeking students who enter a given institution at the same time (for example, the fall term of a given year).

### Measures for Achieving the Dream Institutional Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Measure
1. Remedial course completion <sup>a</sup>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Math: % of cohort referred to developmental math that successfully completed highest level developmental math course.</li> <li>b. Reading: % of cohort referred to developmental reading that successfully completed highest level developmental reading course.</li> <li>c. English: % of cohort referred to developmental English that successfully completed highest level developmental English course.</li> </ol>
2. Gatekeeper <sup>b</sup> course completion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Math: % of cohort that successfully completed "gatekeeper math" course.</li> <li>b. English: % of cohort that successfully completed "gatekeeper English" course.</li> </ol>
3. Course completion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ratio of successfully completed credits to attempted credits.</li> </ol>
4. Persistence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Term-to-term: % of cohort that enrolled in the term following initial term of enrollment.</li> <li>b. Year-to-year A: % of cohort that enrolled in at least one term in the second year.</li> <li>c. Year-to-year B: % of cohort that enrolled in at least one term per year for a given number of years.</li> </ol>
5. Credential completion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Associate degree: % of cohort that earned an associate degree.</li> <li>b. Certificate or diploma: % of cohort that earned a certificate or diploma.</li> <li>c. Still enrolled: % of cohort that enrolled in at least one term in the final year of the time period being examined.</li> </ol>

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> A student must earn a grade of C or better to successfully complete a course.

<sup>b</sup> A "gatekeeper course" is the first college-level or degree-credit (non-remedial) course in a given subject area at an institution.