

Executive Summary
Report of a Survey of Student Persistence Barriers:
The Tulsa Community College Achieving the Dream Data Team
December 9, 2011

Abstract

This report presents the results of a survey of student-identified barriers to student persistence through the first semester at TCC. The survey was developed by TCC's Achieving the Dream (ATD) Data Team and was administered in April 2011. The survey questions were derived from information obtained through a comprehensive study of student persistence at TCC in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008, during which the Data Team conducted focus groups with students, faculty and staff. The Data Team's purpose for developing the Survey of Student Persistence Barriers was to deepen its understanding of the challenges to persistence that TCC students experience in their first semester at TCC. The findings highlight the importance of particular barriers in predicting student success and suggest areas for potential interventions.

Significant Findings

The 2011 Persistence Barriers Survey supplies new data about the challenges to persistence that students encounter in their first semester at TCC. Notably, data analysis of survey results also reveals correlations between student-reported persistence barriers and actual student success outcomes (GPA and spring-to-fall persistence). Statistically significant correlations were found between several categories of persistence barriers and student GPAs at the end of the first year. Specifically, students who were not college-ready (defined in terms of difficulty with adjusting to college, trouble with balancing school and life, a lack of motivation, poor time management, or poor academic preparation) earned lower GPAs than their college-ready counterparts. Students who experienced financial barriers or transportation challenges

earned lower GPAs. Students who placed into developmental education also earned lower GPAs. Students testing into more than one developmental area experienced less college readiness, more financial barriers, more transportation challenges, and more negative experience with TCC services than students who tested into only one developmental area or who tested at the college level in academic skills. Finally, a significant correlation was found between spring-to-fall persistence and low levels of social support (defined in terms of a lack of peer connections and a lack of encouragement).

The Full Report

The full report of the Persistence Barriers Survey includes three recommendations from the Data Team, based on its analysis of the 2011 Persistence Barriers Survey, including specific areas of focus for intervention. The report also includes the survey instrument, a list of inferential tests performed on the survey results, and other appendices. The report is posted on the Academic Affairs tab of the MyTCC Portal.