



Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count

Houston Community College

September 30, 2004

Achieving the Dream Grant Project



- Multi-year initiative to increase the success of underserved students at community colleges
- Funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education and managed by MDC, Inc.



National Partners

- American Association of Community Colleges
- Community College Leadership Program, University of Texas-Austin
- Community College Research center, Teachers College, Columbia University
- Futures Project, Brown University
- Jobs for the Future
- MDRC
- Public Agenda



First Participants

27 community colleges in 5 states:

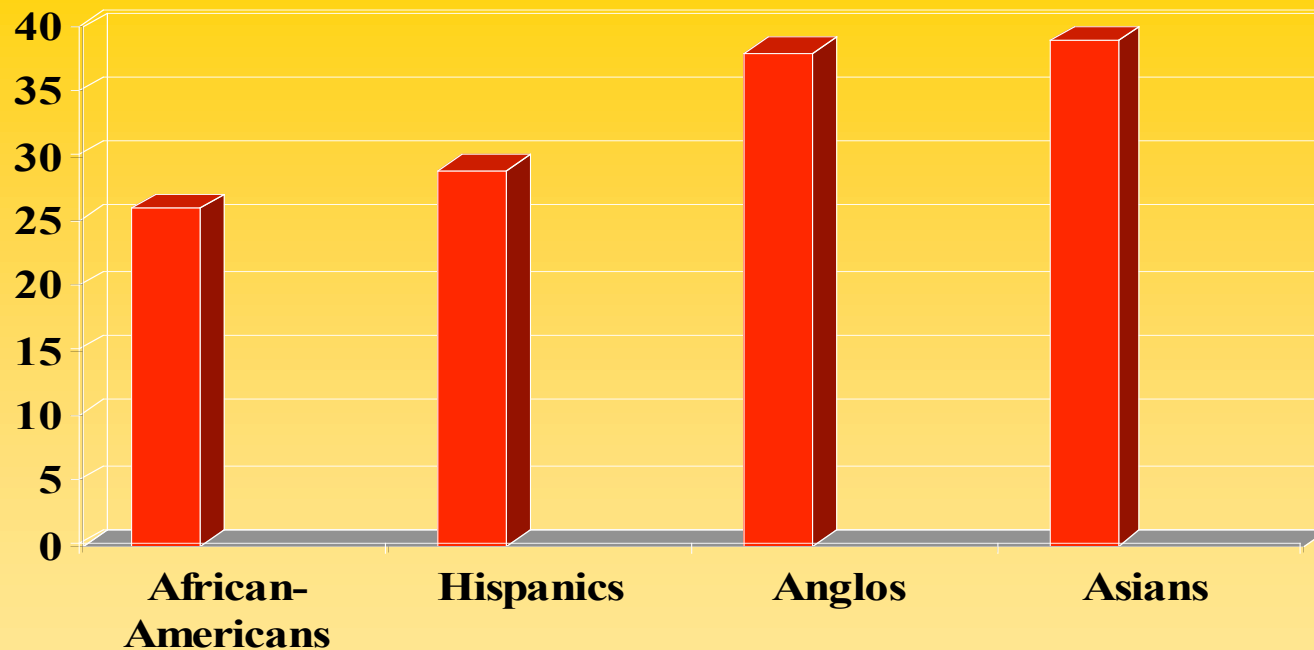
- ✓ Texas
- ✓ New Mexico
- ✓ Florida
- ✓ North Carolina
- ✓ Virginia

Introduction to the Problem



- Education and economic opportunity are inseparable in today's economy - over 80% of today's job require some level of post-secondary education/training.
- Community colleges are the entry point for many Americans, especially low-income, first generation college-goers, and students of color.
- While access has notably increased for these students, success rates remain low.

Certificate/Degree Completion Rates within 6 yrs for Students from 1995-96



Characteristics Reducing Students' Chances for Success



- Delayed enrollment after HS graduation
- Lack of HS diploma
- Part-time enrollment
- Full-time work (at least 30 hrs a week)
- Financial independence from parents
- Dependents other than spouse
- Single parenthood

Goals of Achieving the Dream



Increase percentage of low-income students and students of color who:

1. Successfully complete developmental courses and progress to credit courses;
2. Enroll in and complete credit “gatekeeper” courses;
3. Complete courses they take with a C or higher;
4. Re-enroll from one semester to the next; and
5. Earn certificates and degrees.

Achieving the Dream – Change at Many Levels



- Institutional change
- Supportive state and national policies
- Positive public attitudes
- Improved student outcomes
- Enhanced capacity of national organizations



Achieving the Dream – Principles and Values

Promoting Student Success

- ❖ Student-centered vision
- ❖ Culture of evidence and accountability
- ❖ Commitment to equity and excellence



Achieving the Dream – Principles and Values

Promoting Institutional Change

- ❖ Long-term impact requires change in systems
- ❖ Strategies must be appropriate to college and student needs
- ❖ Broad-based participation is essential
- ❖ Inside and outside voices must be heard
- ❖ Institutional change is both technical and adaptive

Achieving the Dream: A Vision for HCC



At HCC, students will:

- ✓ Gain unproblematic access to college;
- ✓ Experience a first semester and year that provides necessary basic skills and successful orientation to college;
- ✓ Receive effective academic advising and counseling;
- ✓ Receive effective monitoring and support;
- ✓ Become fully engaged with their own learning, with each other, with faculty, and with the community.