

CSI, SKYLINE: FIGHT THE TRENDS

By Karen Wong, CSI Co-coordinator

Whenever I ask students how many want to transfer, a vast majority raise their hands. This response is typical in most classes across campus, and helping students to transfer is one

of our campus' missions. But how many students are enroute to achieving this goal? Let's take a look at the statistics provided by the Research and Planning Office. Of the approximately 75% who place in pre-transfer English,

how many are able to persist into and through transfer level courses? Narrowing the scope, out of the original 2,328 students who enrolled in the lowest English course (English 826) from 2002- 2007, which percentage eventually enrolled in and passed a transfer level course: (a) 75% or more, (b) 50-74%, (c) 25- 49%, or (d) 1- 24%? Of the starting cohort, which includes both students who enroll in the next levels as well as those who forgo

enrolling, 25% eventually passed the transfer level course; thus "C" is the answer. Applying the same concept to Math, the situation is even direr. With slightly fewer students placing in pre-

transfer Math, of the 1,863 students who attempted the lowest level Math course (Math 811), only 5% enrolled in and eventually passed a transfer level Math course. Evidently we're not alone; the 5% is consistent statewide. When the statistics are disaggregated according to ethnicity, Latino and Black students are

disproportionately impacted, so sharply coming into focus is the issue of equity. While there are certainly a wide range of potential explanations for these findings, they are nonetheless the reality we and other colleges face.

Freaked out? I am. Time to panic? No. Reason to roll up our sleeves? Absolutely. Quite simply, we need to reverse those trends because the quality of our students' lives is at stake, as is



Math faculty David Hasson, Michael Hoffman, Vanson Nguyen, & Jonathan Freedman at Spring Flex

the quality of life in California, whose economy and well being is largely dependent on an educated workforce. These findings certainly seem to call for changing our approach in a significant and systemic way; in fact, such an initiative has been underway since 2006, Skyline's College Success Initiative, the CSI (a.k.a. the Basic Skills Initiative, the BSI). Funded by a grant from the Chancellor's Office for California Community Colleges, the BSI has enabled us to explore the meaning and implications of numbers like the aforementioned, and to craft and implement a response that draws on our campus' resources and expertise and is best suited for our student population.

Why did Skyline rename the BSI as the CSI? After all, the statewide initiative is named the BSI. We believe that improving the success rates of basic skills students is not confined to basic skills classes. With over 70% of the student population testing in to basic skills courses, almost every class on campus is likely to have at least one basic skills student enrolled in it, or a student who successfully matriculated through at least one basic skills course. Thus it's important for

us not to serve solely basic skills courses, but rather to serve the needs of basic skills students through effective pedagogy, curriculum, programs, and services. The newly minted CSI, College Success Initiative, seeks to serve these students no matter where they are in the sequence.

Reflecting our revised CSI mission is the most recent implementation plan that is being spearheaded by new personnel assignments. In addition to Counselor Virginia Padron replacing Jacquie Escobar to coordinate the Student Services parts of the plan, three faculty will be joining the CSI leadership: Counselor Melissa Komadina as the OnCourse Coordinator, Math Faculty Michael Hoffman as the ACS Learning Community Coordinator, and Math Faculty David Hasson as the Contextualized Teaching and Learning Strategies Coordinator. To find out more about these remarkable individuals and the projects they're coordinating, read on. As you will quickly discover, you have before you many opportunities to get involved.

Michael Hoffman: FIGs on the ACS Learning Community

My name is Michael Hoffman, and I am the new Achieving College Success (ACS) Learning Community Coordinator. I received an MA in Mathematics from San Francisco State University in Spring 2008 and have been teaching and tutoring developmental Math at Skyline ever since. My experience working with developmental math students led to my interest in the Supplemental Instruction (SI) CSI program, which enabled a fantastic group of faculty to collaborate on providing extra assistance to students who typically struggle with basic skills courses. I see my position as the ACS LC Coordinator as an extension of that work, as we are looking to expand the supplemental support model to include a wider layer of faculty and counselors working in partnership to implement an integrated curriculum for first-year students. We will be holding a faculty inquiry group (FIG) next semester to design the program. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact me at hoffmanm@smccd.edu.



David Hasson: Contextualized Teaching and Learning Strategies

Hi, I'm David Hasson. For the last three years I have tutored and taught Math here at Skyline College. Recently I have been put in charge of developing a contextualized math curriculum for our Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. I am no stranger to creating lesson plans centered in real world situations. Prior to Skyline, I took part in a year and a half National Science Foundation (NSF) grant at SFSU, the Revitalizing Algebra Workshop (REAL). As a member, I synthesized educational research in order to create lessons centered in students' personal experiences. This led to my Master's thesis on students' use of idiosyncratic metaphors in Calculus. By speaking with my colleagues in CTE, I aim to identify their students' mathematical needs, and meet them accordingly through a tailored curriculum that illuminates necessary mathematical concepts through the frame of concrete experience in a specific career. I also welcome the participation of those who are interested in collaborating with me and/ or others to develop contextualized curriculum and instructional strategies for English, Math, or ESOL in (a) Energy and Utilities, (b) Education, Child Development, and Family Services, or (c) Health, Science, and Medical Technology. If you're interested in getting involved, please e-mail me at hassond@smccd.edu.



Melissa Komadina: Skyline's Fall Semester is *On Course*

Hi, I'm Melissa Komadina. I'm thrilled to be a part of CSI, coordinating the continued effort of training faculty and staff across all disciplines with the *On Course* curriculum. *On Course* (OC) principles help students succeed in the classroom by taking greater personal responsibility, bettering self-management skills, and learning to effectively communicate academic needs and goals. Having taught the OC curriculum in the COUN 100 College Success course at Skyline College and having participated in the training, I feel fortunate to be coordinator of the OC movement on our campus. What's in store for the fall semester? I will continue to recruit faculty and staff across the disciplines, pre-transfer and transfer level, adjunct and full-time, to participate in the OC training effort. In addition, flex day activities and brown-bag sessions for current OC faculty and staff who would like to meet and discuss their experiences with the curriculum will be on the calendar. And lastly, The OC Sharepoint will be another venue for currently trained faculty and staff to continue dialogue and find related resources for their curriculum. If you have any questions, my door is open. I can be reached via email at komadina@smccd.edu.

College Success Initiative: Building a Pathway for Access, Progress, and Success

