

**Brazosport College**  
**Achieving the Dream**  
**Annual Narrative & Financial Report – April 2008**

Name of Institution: Brazosport College

Date: April 28, 2008

Achieving the Dream Funder: Houston Endowment

Grant Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Report submitted by:

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## I. Culture of Evidence and Inquiry

a. Has the institution upgraded its institutional research capacity this year?

No

Yes

If yes, briefly describe the changes and their impact on the college.

b. Has there been any change in the institution's use of data in institutional decision-making this year?

No

Yes

If yes, briefly describe your new practices and their impact to date.

The Data Team has reviewed student success data. Data reviews have led to the need for additional information regarding student success. Information has been developed and shared with the college community in the form of updates from the Institutional Research Office. Questions requiring the use of data have been used to frame institutional planning. The Planning Committee has broadened the use of Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) data and new surveys, including the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) survey for entering students and the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, have been administered in 2008.

c. What institutional research challenges has the college faced this year?

- None
- Too few IR staff positions
- Unfilled staff positions
- IR staff skill deficits
- Difficulty retrieving useful, timely data
- Other (describe)

Comments:

Brazosport College has been searching for a research analyst to support institutional research. This position is currently open, and staff are reviewing other options for staffing.

d. Has the institution made use of any 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?

For a number of years, student data have been reported quarterly to the college Board of Regents. One change has been a sharper focus on reporting student success data.

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

- No
- Yes

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

The Achieving the Dream Data Team has looked more closely at data related to success of different groups of students based on ethnicity, part-time/full-time status, financial aid, gender, developmental/non-developmental, and hours working outside the college.

## II. Stakeholder Involvement

a. In what ways have faculty and staff been actively engaged in your Achieving the Dream efforts this year?

- Provided oversight or coordination of Achieving the Dream initiatives
- Designed new student success initiatives
- Participated in focus groups or discussions related to Achieving the Dream initiatives
- Participated in professional development to further student success
- Other (describe)

Comments:

Faculty and staff at Brazosport College have developed a Learning Frameworks course that must be taken by all transitional education students. Initial results show that this course is having a positive impact on course completion and persistence.

Our Achieving the Dream Initiative has involved a series of conversations and presentations with faculty, staff, and other stakeholders. Faculty and staff members also receive updates on student success in a monthly report from the IR office. Beginning in 2006, AtD was the topic for the Fall 2006 Convocation. During this Convocation, all college employees had an opportunity to hear about the work of Houston Community College as a pilot college in the Achieving the Dream initiative. On November 9, 2006, the entire college community participated in an AtD Data Summit. The purpose of the data summit was to disseminate data regarding student success and gather input from faculty and staff on the steps that should be taken to improve student success. More recently, AtD has been the topic of numerous meetings. These meetings include: 1) a presentation given to the Brazosport College Board of Regents on February 1, 2008, 2) a presentation given to the Brazosport College Institutional Planning and Effectiveness Committee on February 28, 2008, and 3) a presentation given to the Brazosport College Foundation Board on April 16, 2008.

In addition to the various meetings described above, faculty and staff have been instrumental in coordinating AtD initiatives. For example, during the 2007-2008 academic year, faculty on the intake and placement committee designed a focus group of counselors as well as a survey to assess student perceptions of placement processes. Also, nearly half of our faculty and staff have completed one of our implementation strategies, professional development training.

- b. How have you involved students in your work this year?
- Surveys (describe)
  - Focus groups (describe)
  - Students participate on planning or advisory committees (describe)
  - Other (describe)

Comments:

Students have been involved in three primary ways. First, students provide on-going information regarding the effectiveness of PSYC 1300, Learning Frameworks. This information has been primarily gathered through an end-of-course satisfaction survey. However, in addition to this survey, students will be involved in 3 different feedback groups to be conducted during the week of April 28, 2008. Second, students participated in the piloting of a survey used to gather perceptions of placement testing. Third, students participated in the annual Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Workshop, an event designed to establish milestones for the planning process. Student success is a major component in the planning document, Vision 2010.

- c. How have you involved the larger community this year?
- K-14 collaboration (describe)
  - Community conversations/forums (describe)
  - Other (describe)

K-14 Work of Coordinating Councils

The college has established coordinating councils with each of the ISD's in our service area. Membership is comprised of counselors and administrators from each of the respective schools and the college. Agendas include review of student success data and discussion of issues and roadblocks to achieving greater levels of successful participation in college. These groups meet twice each academic year with on-going communication on specific projects and purposes.

Another on-going collaborative is the annual Counselor Administrator Dinner hosted on campus each year. Participation is at the Board, CEO, and Counselor Administrator level. This year the program focused on student transfer and we shared data and information related to their students who begin at Brazosport College and later transfer to a university. In addition, we had participation from the University of Houston who is one of the recurring institutions for a large segment of our student transfer population.

Community Conversations/forums

Brazosport College fully engaged its community in discussion of higher education trends and future direction through two very high stakes activities. The first was the development of a long range Master Plan that included community focus groups held both in the colleges service area and taxing district. A professional consulting firm was engaged to develop the Master Plan and as such used a basic SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to gain input for the Plan. Based on this information, the college developed multi-year plans geared to moving the college and the student success agenda forward.

The second step in this process was to engage the taxing district in a discussion of the Master Plan, its educational objectives, and the necessity of resources to carry it out. This resulted in the Board of Regents calling for a General Bond Referendum for November 2007.

Over the course of two months, the college engaged both the internal and the greater community in this conversation. This included college open houses, presentations to civic groups, and resolutions of support by local school boards and city councils. The communication plan was coordinated effort between the Board of Regents, Brazosport College Foundation Board of Directors, Brazosport College Student Political Action Committee, and Community Political Action Committee. Rather than focusing on the construction of facilities, the message was focused on educational goals and outcomes and student success. The community overwhelmingly supported this effort with a 68% approval rating. AtD is featured on the college web site and has been a topic for feature articles in the local newspaper, the *Brazosport Facts*.

d. How have the president, chancellor, and/or campus CEOs participated in your Achieving the Dream work this year? They have:

- Participated actively on an Achieving the Dream team
- Regularly monitored the college's Achieving the Dream work
- Made presentations about Achieving the Dream issues to:
  - faculty & staff
  - community groups
  - trustees
  - Other (describe)

Comments:

The President consistently monitors the college's Achieving the Dream work and participates to the extent possible in Core Team meetings. Over the course of the past year she has also attended the Strategy Institute Workshop with team members and the Trustee Institute with Board members. Additionally, she has provided support for convocation speakers whose topics with expertise support the Student Success Agenda. Information about Achieving the Dream has been presented at Board meetings. Student data is included in quarterly Board reports and a major focus for the annual Board Workshop this past February was on preliminary results of the first year implementation of the college's student success course. The college mission statement has been revised to emphasize our commitment to student success. As the college's multi-year strategic plan is updated, AtD and the QEP goals are aligned and integrated with the planning process.

### III. Strategic Interventions

- a. Online reporting. Please list the interventions that you have reported online using the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool*, and indicate when you entered the most recent information on each intervention. (Note: In order to receive your 2008-09 Achieving the Dream grant, data for the Fall 2007 term must be entered by April 30. Information from the Spring 2008 term must be entered by July 31.)

<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Date of entry or most recent update</i>
Implementation of a Learning Frameworks Course	April 26, 2008
Professional Development: Transitional Education Program Training	April 26, 2008
Improvement of Initial Student Placement System	April 26, 2008

- b. Progress in implementing planned initiatives. Please describe your progress this year, briefly addressing each of the following questions:

**1. Which initiatives have been implemented as planned this year?**

Learning Frameworks and professional development training have been implemented as planned this year.

## **2. Which initiatives have been delayed, modified, or cancelled, and why?**

Neither Learning Frameworks nor professional development training have been delayed, modified, or cancelled.

## **3. What obstacles have you faced this year in implementing planned strategies and interventions? How have you addressed these challenges?**

The major challenge faced thus far is the management of large volumes of data collected for the initiative. While we have an excellent resource in our AtD data team, our institutional research office currently consists of only one person, due to the fact that we have not yet been able to hire an additional staff person in this area. We have re-prioritized other staff work assignments until this position can be filled. We have carried forward the money budgeted in Year 1 for this position and will apply it to the salary for this person as soon as the position is filled, which we anticipate to be this summer. The college is currently involved in several student success initiatives. It will be important to develop a comprehensive student success model that incorporates all of our student success initiatives. Such a model would aid in the management of this data.

## **4. What changes do you propose for next year? Why do you believe the proposed changes will produce better results?**

Two primary changes will occur in our AtD strategies. First, data from PSYC 1300 feedback sessions and the pre-post survey will be used to modify the curriculum in PSYC 1300. Based upon preliminary data from the pre-post data, it is clear that more focus should be placed on the following constructs: goal orientation, task value, control of learning, help-seeking behaviors, effort-regulation, time and study environment, and test anxiety. In addition, data from the pilot study of student perceptions of placement testing will be used to revise the instrument before administration in the Fall 2008 semester. The professional development curriculum will be adjusted based on participant feedback provided in both formative and summative

assessments. Specifically, assigned readings will be supplemented, instructions revised, and data updated. These changes will improve content delivery and make more information available to faculty in the allotted time.

**5. Have you taken any successful interventions to scale institution-wide this year? If so, briefly describe.**

Both PSYC 1300 and professional development have been institutionalized. It is possible that PSYC 1300 may be required for *all* incoming Brazosport College students in the future. However, data will need to demonstrate the efficacy of such a plan. In addition, professional development may be expanded to adjunct faculty members.

#### **IV. Institutionalization**

**a. In what ways have you aligned and integrated your Achieving the Dream work with core activities, processes, and policies of the institution this year?**

Institutional efforts to support work on Achieving the Dream have been integrated into a number of college activities. One major change, following discussing with the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Council and Board of Regents, was a revision in the Brazosport College mission statement to include a commitment to student success. This change in the mission statement also shaped discussions in the annual planning process and led to several milestones related to student success being incorporated into the college planning document, *Vision 2010*. Campus discussions about student success have resulted in closer looks at student success data as referenced earlier in this report.

As a result of the campus-wide discussion on student success, the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Council has taken a number of data sources including State Accountability Measures, AtD, QEP, CCSSE, and Student Satisfaction, and from these selected 8 target goals for improving student success. Current efforts involve developing campus-wide strategies to reach these target goals.

This emphasis on student success has also been incorporated into curricular reviews with development of specific learning outcomes for each course and an assessment of the achievement of these outcomes by students. This information is currently being incorporated into a program which will allow a closer look at outcomes data for course improvements.

b. Have additional resources been committed toward the institution’s Achieving the Dream interventions this year?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please share the following information:

<i>Source of funds</i>	<i>Approximate dollar amount</i>	<i>Which interventions are these resources supporting?</i>
College E&G Budget – Salaries	\$68,352	Learning Frameworks
College E&G Budget – Fringe Benefits	\$13,670	Learning Frameworks

## V. Evaluation

a. 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

b. What obstacles (if any) have you faced in designing or conducting the evaluation? How are you addressing these obstacles?

See answer (b) to section VII following.

c. Have you uploaded any evaluative data using the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool*?

- No
- Yes

d. If you have any other evaluative data that you would like to share, please summarize it here and/or attach to your report.

## VI. Communications

a. How have you shared information and lessons from your Achieving the Dream work within the institution this year?

- Web site
- Regular reports to trustees
- Regular reports to faculty and staff
- Regular reports to students
- Special Achieving the Dream reports
- Achieving the Dream events
- Other (describe)

Comments:

Achieving the Dream information is available on our Website, [www.brazosport.edu](http://www.brazosport.edu), by clicking on the Community tab and then on Achieving the Dream. Faculty and staff also receive updates in a monthly report from the IR office. Reports are provided monthly to the Board of Regents.

Student success initiatives are the focus of our Convocations at the start of each semester.

Recent meeting include: a presentation given to the Brazosport College Board of Regents on February 1, 2008; a presentation given to the Brazosport College Institutional Planning and Effectiveness Committee on February 28, 2008; and a presentation given to the Brazosport College Foundation Board on April 16, 2008.

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

- Conference presentations (list conferences)
- Presentations to community groups
- Press releases
- Papers/articles disseminated locally
- Papers/articles disseminated statewide or nationally
- Other (describe)

Comments:

AtD information and lessons are shared with our local ISD's each semester in the Coordinating Councils mentioned earlier in section II (c). In the fall of 2007, numerous community focus groups were held in the college's service area where this information was shared and input was requested. Another communication piece was the *Brazosport College Celebrates Student*

*Success* story referenced in part (c) below. This story was shared with the 160 guests attending the Area Administrator/Counselor/Trustees Dinner hosted by Brazosport College. Guests included four area superintendents, their administrative staffs and their boards of trustees. The story was also shared with the 50 guests attending the Ice Cream Social celebrating Texas Community College Student Day. Guests included elected legislative officials for the college district and their representatives

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

No

Yes

If yes, please provide the reference.

The regional newspaper for Southern Brazoria County is *The Brazosport Facts*.

- The Brazosport Facts, "Brazosport College receives \$400,000", August 9, 2007
- The Brazosport Facts, "Brazosport College Helping Students Transition to College Studies", August 23, 2007
- The Brazosport Facts, "Brazosport College received \$50,000", September 18, 2007
- Brazosport College Website, "Brazosport College Partners in Student Success", September 25, 2007, <http://www.brazosport.edu/sites/General/NewsAndEvents/2007NewsArchive/ss092507.htm>
- Brazosport College Website, "Brazosport College Celebrates Student Success", January 21, 2008, <http://www.brazosport.edu/sites/General/NewsAndEvents/Current%20News/Community%20College%20Student%20Day.doc>

## VII. Summary of Accomplishments and Disappointments

a. Briefly describe your one or two greatest accomplishments this year.

One of the most important accomplishments of this initiative has been increased communication and a college- and community-wide interest in, and focus on, student success.

Through strategies such as data summits and professional development training, college faculty and staff are provided a forum to discuss those practices that lead, or do not lead, to student success. In addition, when such conversations are based upon objective data and not subjective opinions, progress is made.

b. What disappointments or setbacks (if any) have you faced this year?

The biggest obstacle was in gearing up to handle a greatly increased need for gathering disaggregated data. Because our college is involved with numerous data-gathering initiatives, it is difficult to manage such a large volume of data. In addition, our Institutional Research office is currently small and correspondingly limited in its ability to handle data requests. It will be critical to fill the advertised additional Data Analyst position as our need for data increases.

c. Is there anything else you would like MDC or your funder to know about your work this year?

Achieving the Dream is a vitally important initiative. Like other programs the college engages in, there will likely be setbacks and unanticipated problems. However, through this process, the importance of using data to drive decisions about student success has been underscored. This change in culture has been firmly planted at Brazosport College. Such a lesson will no doubt affect numerous college processes and other student success initiatives in a positive way.

## VIII. 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, email [atd@mdcinc.org](mailto:atd@mdcinc.org).

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, email [atd@mdcinc.org](mailto:atd@mdcinc.org) for instructions and a template.

Comments:

Our recent budget modification request to reallocate some monies due to our software costs being less than expected was approved by MDC Inc. on April 15, 2008. That revised budget follows. The following pages show that we have spent the requested amounts on the revised budget with the exception of the Year One 40% salary allotment for the Data Analyst that is still being advertised and the corresponding Fringe Benefits amount associated with that salary. We will carry those amounts forward to Year Two.

## PROPOSAL BUDGET

### *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count*

**Name of Organization:** Brazosport College

**Revision Date:** April 15, 2008

SUGGESTED BUDGET CATEGORIES		REQUESTED SUPPORT					TOTAL SUPPORT REQUESTED
		Year 1	Year 1 Actual Expenses (3/31/08)	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
<b>1</b>	<b>Direct Costs</b>						
	<b>Personnel Expenses</b>						
	Salaries (list staff, title, salary, <50% of time)	\$63,242	\$45,568	\$63,242	\$52,702	\$39,525	\$218,711
	Fringe Benefits (list 20% rate)	\$12,648	\$9,114	\$12,648	\$10,540	\$7,905	\$43,741
	<i>SUBTOTAL: Personnel Expenses</i>	\$75,890	\$54,682	\$75,890	\$63,242	\$47,430	\$262,452
	<b>Other Direct Expenses</b>						
	Stipends for faculty/staff	\$10,280	\$10,280	\$11,880	\$24,520	\$29,520	\$76,200
	Travel	\$9,600	\$9,600	\$8,000	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$24,800
	Materials and Supplies	\$437	\$437	\$437	\$437	\$437	\$1,748
	Software/Programming	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$2,500	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
	Focus Groups	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400			\$4,800
	<i>SUBTOTAL: Other Direct Expenses</i>	\$30,217	\$30,217	\$25,217	\$38,557	\$43,557	\$137,548
<b>2</b>	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$106,107</b>	<b>\$84,899</b>	<b>\$101,107</b>	<b>\$101,799</b>	<b>\$90,987</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

**Budget Details**

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 1 Actual Expenses (3/31/08)</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Direct Costs</b>						
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>						
<b>Salaries</b>						
Data Analyst, 40% time in years 1 & 2, one-third time in year 3, one-fourth time in year 4. Reporting to the Director of Institutional Research and responsible for entering AtD data and generating required initiative reports. Salary institutionalized by year 5.	\$17,674	\$0	\$17,674	\$14,728	\$11,046	\$61,122
Two Learning Frameworks (PSYC 1300) faculty, 40% time in years 1 & 2, one-third time in year 3, one-fourth time in year 4. Based on our transitional student population, twelve sections of the course are needed each long semester. Reporting to the Director of Transitional Education and responsible for teaching the transitional education, tutoring, and goal tracking programs. Salary institutionalized by year 5.	\$33,880	\$33,880	\$33,880	\$28,234	\$21,174	\$117,168
Office Specialist, 40% time in years 1 & 2, one-third time in year 3, one-fourth time in year 4. Reporting to the Director, Transitional Education and responsible for office support for transitional education and tutoring. Salary institutionalized by year 5.	\$11,688	\$11,688	\$11,688	\$9,740	\$7,305	\$40,421
<b>Fringe Benefits</b> 20% of salaries	\$12,648	\$9,114	\$12,648	\$10,540	\$7,905	\$43,741
<b>Subtotal: Personnel Expenses</b>	<b>\$75,890</b>	\$54,682	<b>\$75,890</b>	<b>\$63,242</b>	<b>\$47,430</b>	<b>\$262,452</b>

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 1 Actual Expenses (3/31/08)</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Other Direct Expenses</b>						
<b>Stipends for Faculty/Staff</b>						
Release time (one course) for two faculty to serve as trainers during implementation of professional development (adjunct replacement costs). Two faculty (1 course each) for 4 semesters.	\$6,180	\$6,180	\$6,180			\$12,360
20% Release time for two English faculty to operate Writing Center				\$14,520	\$14,520	\$29,040
Tutoring staff for students in transitional and gatekeeper courses	\$4,100	\$4,100	\$5,700	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$34,800
<b>Focus Groups</b>	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400			\$4,800
<b>Travel</b>	\$9,600	\$9,600	\$8,000	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$24,800
AtD meetings. each participant @ an average of \$900 each (airfare @ \$300, lodging @ \$120 per night x 4 nights, per diem @ \$120)						
<b>Materials</b>	\$437	\$437	\$437	\$437	\$437	\$1,748
Professional Development: Cost of printing materials at an average of \$4.37 per person per semester.						
<b>Software/Programming</b>						
Purchase Writing Support Software (exact amount will be based on specific package purchased). This estimate includes fees, set up, and training.				\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Programming of POISE learning competencies transcript software	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$2,500			\$10,000
<b>Subtotal: Other Direct Expenses</b>	<b>\$30,217</b>	<b>\$30,217</b>	<b>\$25,217</b>	<b>\$38,557</b>	<b>\$43,557</b>	<b>\$137,548</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$106,107</b>	<b>\$84,899</b>	<b>\$101,107</b>	<b>\$101,799</b>	<b>\$90,987</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

APPENDIX A

INTERVENTION

“Implementation of a Learning Frameworks Course”

Uploaded to the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool* on April 26, 2008

**Submitted:** April 26, 2008

**Intervention type:** Direct

**Intervention name:** Implementation of a Learning Frameworks Course

**Start Date:** Fall 2007

**Type:** Student Success Course

**Target Group Builder:** Academically underprepared students

**Estimate of the number of students enrolled or otherwise benefitting from this intervention this term:** 206

**Do students have to satisfy certain criteria to take part in the intervention:** Yes

This course is required of all students whose placement testing shows them to be below college level in either reading, writing, or mathematics. Other students may take the course if they want to take a college success course.

**Are any special efforts made to recruit students to take part in the intervention:** Yes

Students below college level in any area are required to take this course. Instructional division chairs can refer students to this course if they are in academic difficulty. College counselors can also suggest to students who may particularly benefit from this course that they take it also.

**Intervention Description:**

This intervention strategy focuses on providing students with the academic and personal skills needed for college success. Incoming students lacking college level skills (as determined by performance on state-approved placement exams) in any area (Reading, Writing, or Math) will start their transitional plan by taking a college success course called Learning Frameworks (PSYC 1300).

PSYC 1300 is a 3-credit hour, college-level, transferable course. Touted as “on the job training” to become a successful college student, this course is designed to support students’ discipline-specific transitional courses by enhancing study skills and by assisting students in setting goals.

Specific topics include the following: 1) how college is different than high school, 2) taking notes, 3) preparing for objective and essay exams, 4) rehearsal strategies, 5) improving memory, 6) goal-setting, 7) getting to know the college campus, 8) improving reading, 9) time management, 10) improving writing, 11) conducting research, 12) understanding motivation, 13) learning styles, 14) active learning strategies, 15) career explorations, and 16) handling stress.

**What Achieving the Dream measures of student progress and success will be directly impacted by this intervention? (Where appropriate, evaluations described below should be able to document changes in these outcomes.)**

- Percent of students who successfully complete developmental courses and progress to credit-bearing courses
- Percent of students who enroll and successfully complete gatekeeper courses
- Percent of students who complete the courses they take, with a grade of C or higher
- Percent of students who re-enroll from one semester to the next
- Percent of students who earn certificates and/or degrees

**Briefly describe your evaluation strategy and discuss the outcome measures you are using. Be sure to clearly describe the expected measurable changes (e.g. change after 2 and 4 years) as result of the intervention.**

A variety of data is being collected to evaluate the success of this implementation strategy. This data includes: 1) student learning outcomes in the classroom, 2) course grades in gatekeeper courses, 3) withdrawal rates in gatekeeper courses, 4) a pre-post learning skills survey, 5) persistence rates, and 6) goal attainment. One of the goals of this implementation strategy is that PSYC 1300 students will demonstrate content knowledge in transitional math, reading, and writing courses. To assess this goal, we will collect data on general learning outcomes for students in these transitional courses. Data collection will commence in Summer 2008. It is anticipated that there will be a 5% increase in achievement of learning outcomes for students who complete PSYC 1300.

In addition to general learning outcomes, course grades will be collected in College Algebra (MATH 1314) and Composition and Rhetoric (ENGL 1301). This evaluation will compare grade distributions in these gatekeeper courses, stratified by those who participated in PSYC 1300 and those who have not. Our intention is that those students who complete PSYC 1300 will show a 15% improvement by the end of the second year and 30% improvement by the end of the fourth year and be equal to those students who do not require transitional coursework.

Withdrawal rates in college-level courses will also be examined. This data will be stratified by those who participate in PSYC 1300 and those who do not. It is expected that withdrawal rates will decrease by 3% within two years and by 10% within four years.

The next component is a survey that measures key constructs taught in PSYC 1300. Students complete the survey at the beginning of the course and again at the end. Data collection for the Fall 2007 semester is complete.

In the area of goal attainment, the number of degrees and certificates awarded will be tracked. This data will again be stratified by those who participate in PSYC 1300 and those who do not.

**Are you comparing the results to any of the following:** other comparison group

**Please explain the characteristics of the targeted group for this intervention:**

The targeted group for this intervention includes those students who have been placed into one or more transitional (i.e., developmental) courses as determined by scores on a state-approved placement test. Students who score below college-level cut-off scores in Reading, Writing, or Math are required to take PSYC 1300 as part of their educational plan.

**How many terms are you planning to track the outcomes of students in the intervention:**  
indefinitely

**Upload a file that documents intervention outcomes disaggregated by appropriate subgroups, this file should provide data that clearly demonstrates the impact of the intervention and be directly related to the evaluation strategy noted above. If this is a new intervention you are encourage to load base line data to better describe the population of interest. (Maximum size is 4 MB)**

Uploaded file (April 26, 2008):

### **Learning Frameworks Intervention Data**

Cohort Baseline

The data that are reported are based on cohorts that are defined as first-time-at-Brazosport-College students. Success is defined as completing a course with a grade of “C” or above, or equivalent. The data that follow show baseline data that were used to determine what Brazosport College’s goals would be in four-years. Not enough time has elapsed to show what or how much progress has been made regarding goal attainment. Some anecdotal responses have been very favorable. Results from the first semester of the Learning Frameworks course (last item below) although preliminary, are very encouraging. Brazosport College is making progress in the collection of data it needs for future progress reporting. The baseline data reporting has been extensive and has been disseminated to a number of campus groups along with being available online at the college’s website. A great deal of progress has been made in data collection.

Table 1

<b>Item</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Transitional Students: Fall to Spring Persistence Rate	66.0
Non-Transitional Students: Fall to Spring Persistence Rate	69.7
% of Transitional Education Students who complete remediation and take a college-level course	30.6 (Math) 45.3 (Engl)

Students who come to Brazosport College lacking the necessary skills for college course work have a tendency to withdraw and not return. Two measures that would indicate an improvement of overcoming that behavior would be improving persistence, or a student’s re-enrollment in subsequent semesters, and enrolling in college-level courses. The average

persistence rate of approximately 70 percent for non-transitional students is the target Brazosport College would like to see for the transitional student.

Low enrollment of transitional completers in college-level mathematics and English is quite low as indicated by the 30.6% in mathematics and 45.3% in English over the previous four years. By giving students the skills to succeed in college, as the Learning Frameworks course is designed to do, the likelihood of a student persisting beyond one or two semesters and completing the transitional program becomes much more likely. Brazosport College expects this percentage to increase substantially with the new initiatives in place.

Table II

<b>Item</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Percent of Transitional Education Students who successfully complete MATH1314	45.4
Percent of Non-Transitional Education Students who successfully complete MATH1314	55.5
Percent of Transitional Education Students who successfully complete ENGL1301	64.0
Percent of Non-Transitional Education Students who successfully complete ENGL1301	80.2

Mathematics seems to be the course that causes the greatest hurdle for most students, both transitional and non-transitional, not only at Brazosport College, but also at most community colleges. Brazosport College’s goal is to close the gap between the transitional and non-transitional students who successfully complete MATH 1314, College Algebra, and ENGL 1301, Composition and Rhetoric. The initiatives that Brazosport College has in place are designed to assist students to be placed more appropriately into transitional courses, attain the skills needed for college-level courses, and have more assistance while in those courses so that they are better prepared for college-level work. This holistic approach will assist the student from the front door to goal attainment.

Table III

<b>Item</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Percent of students who were successful in ENGL0406	66.2
Percent of students who were successful in ENGL0409	71.8
Percent of students who were successful in MATH0404	65.5
Percent of students who were successful in MATH0406	57.2
Percent of students who were successful in MATH0408	51.1

A major emphasis of the initiative is to have more successful students in the transitional program. The Learning Frameworks course is designed to help students improve their skills and make the transition to college-level work. Along with other student-service improvements such as the goal setting program and improved assessment and placement, the percent of transitional students being successful will improve substantially from the baselines above.

Table IV

<b>Item</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Percent of withdrawals by transitional students in MATH1314	32.4
Percent of withdrawals by non-transitional students in MATH1314	23.9
Percent of withdrawals by transitional students in ENGL1301	15.9
Percent of withdrawals by non-transitional students in ENGL1301	7.4

The gap between the transitional and non-transitional student for withdrawing from classes is much too great. Brazosport College intends, through the initiatives it has implemented and will implement next year, to close this gap substantially.

**Learning Frameworks Intervention Results To Date**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Fall 2007 successful PSYC1300 students who re-enrolled in spring 2008 (persistence)	87.5

This percentage (87.5%) is but one indicator of how the Learning Frameworks can make a difference. When compared to the 69% above, in Table I, the 87.5% is very impressive. Brazosport College anticipates that the goals it has set for itself will be attained in a like manner.

**Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire  
PSYC 1300 (Learning Frameworks)  
Fall 2007 Pre-Post Survey Results**

**Overview:** This document outlines the results for one of the PSYC 1300 evaluation strategies, the *Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*. Developed by Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, and McKeachie (1991), the MSLQ is specifically designed to measure students' motivation and use of learning strategies.

**Use in AtD:** At Brazosport College, this survey is being used as an evaluation tool to assess students' baseline measures of these constructs as well as *changes* that occur across a given semester. As such, students are asked to take the MSLQ on the first and last days of PSYC 1300.

**Analysis:** Data were analyzed using *paired-comparison t-tests*. This test allows us to determine whether students' self-reported use of these strategies changes over the course of the semester. A total of 196 took the pre-survey. 159 students completed the post-survey.

**Description of tables:** The first table (**Table 1**) in this document outlines the name of each MSLQ construct, its definition, and number of items in the survey. The second table presents the results of the paired-comparison t-tests.

**Overview of Results:** A total of 15 constructs were measured in this survey (see Table 1). Based upon the paired-comparison t-tests, seven of these constructs were significant. In other words, students reported increases in all 7 of these key constructs. Specific information concerning these data are shown in Table 2.

**Table 1-Overview of MSLQ Constructs**

	Scale/Construct	Definition	# of items
<b>Cognitive Learning:</b> Use of cognitive strategies such as memorization, elaboration, and critical thinking	Rehearsal	Memorizing lists of keywords	4
	Elaboration	Paraphrasing, summarizing	6
	Organization	Outlining, identifying important ideas, use of charts, diagrams, and outlines	4
	Critical Thinking	Students' use of strategies to apply previous knowledge to new situations or to make critical evaluations of ideas	5
<b>Metacognition:</b> Use of strategies to help control and regulate one's own cognition	Metacognitive Self-Regulation	Use of strategies that help students control and regulate their own cognition, such as planning, monitoring, and regulating strategies	12
<b>Value Components:</b> reasons why students engage in an academic task	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	Focus on learning and mastery	4
	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	Focus on grades and approval from others	4
	Task Value	Judgments of how interesting, useful, and important course content is to the student	6
<b>Expectancy Components:</b> Students' beliefs that they can accomplish a task	Control of Learning	Extent to which individuals perceive that outcomes are under their control	4
	Self-Efficacy	Judgments of specific capabilities to perform a particular task	8
<b>Affect:</b> Students' worry and concerns over taking exams	Test Anxiety	Worry and concerns with taking exams	5
<b>Resource Management:</b> Use of self- and other resources such as time, peers, and teachers	Time and Study Environment	Using time well, having an appropriate place to study	8
	Effort Regulation	Persisting in the face of a difficult or boring task	4
	Peer Learning	Using a study group or friends to help learn	3
	Help Seeking	Seeking help from friends or teachers when needed	4

**Table 2-Results of Paired-Comparison T-Tests**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>PRE Mean</b>	<b>POST Mean</b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b><i>df</i></b>
Rehearsal	4.46	4.90	**3.60	158
Elaboration	3.88	4.66	**6.33	158
Organization	3.65	4.29	**5.05	158
Critical Thinking	3.78	4.19	**3.08	158
Meta-cognitive Self-Regulation	4.05	4.78	**7.65	158
Intrinsic Goal Orientation	4.44	4.64	1.55	158
Extrinsic Goal Orientation	5.50	5.54	.29	158
Task Value	5.78	5.67	-.89	158
Control of Learning	5.64	5.69	.45	158
Self-Efficacy	5.56	5.93	**3.37	158
Test-Anxiety	4.20	3.98	-1.306	158
Time and Study Environment	4.6627	4.6612	-.02	158
Effort Regulation	4.77	4.81	.36	158
Peer Learning	3.39	3.96	**3.46	158
Help Seeking	4.35	4.38	.23	158

Note: \*\*  $p < .01$ .

APPENDIX B

INTERVENTION

“Professional Development: Transitional Education Program Training”

Uploaded to the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool* on April 26, 2008

**Intervention type:** Non-Direct

**Intervention name:** Professional Development: Transitional Education Program Training

**Start Date:** Spring 2007

**Type:** Faculty Professional Development

**Intervention Description:**

The major goal of the professional development component is to bring together various areas of the college to create a system that works collaboratively to impact student learning. In order to accomplish this goal, a number of criteria, such as holistic treatment of transitional students, goal setting, immediate application of learning skills, and active learning strategies were gleaned from research on developmental education, teaching, learning, and student support services.

The focus of the professional development sessions is to guide faculty and staff as they revisit the relationship between teaching and learning while making the connections necessary to assist students in attaining their goals. The connections recognized by faculty and staff should provide a network that will support students in all areas of the college.

Current literature and best practices in developmental education clearly suggest that the success of learning skills development is contingent upon the student's opportunity to immediately apply their newly acquired learning skills. To ensure that learning skill application takes place, the Employee Development Center will provide mandatory training for faculty and tutorial staff in learning strategies and applications. Faculty will be assisted in acquiring strategies to guide students through skill acquisition. Learning Frameworks faculty and other transitional faculty will work together to bind Learning Frameworks into each transitional course.

**Briefly describe your evaluation strategy and discuss the outcome measures you are using. Be sure to clearly describe the expected measurable changes (e.g. change after 2 and 4 years) as result of the intervention.**

Strategy Goals

1. Provide a summary of the Transitional Education Program and its components.
2. Discuss the diversity and need of our Transitional Learners
3. Provide faculty with tools and techniques to enhance the classroom learning environment.

Measures:

1. Survey completed by participants at the end of each module to measure knowledge gained and identify possible improvements to the training curriculum.
2. Survey completed by participants at the end of the training program.
3. Survey completed by participants one year after training to determine the number of active learning strategies used in the classroom by training participants.

Brazosport College expects an increase in active learning strategies being employed in all courses primarily in years 3 and 4. Baseline data will be generated through surveys administered in professional development sessions that are scheduled during years 1 and 2.

**Upload a file that documents intervention outcomes disaggregated by appropriate subgroups, this file should provide data that clearly demonstrates the impact of the intervention and be directly related to the evaluation strategy noted above. If this is a new intervention you are encourage to load base line data to better describe the population of interest. (Maximum size is 4 MB)**

(no upload until data is collected)

APPENDIX C

INTERVENTION

“Improvement of Initial Student Placement System”

Uploaded to the *Interventions to Improve Student Outcomes Online Tool* on April 26, 2008

**Submitted:** April 26, 2008

**Intervention type:** Non-Direct

**Intervention name:** Improvement of Initial Student Placement System

**Start Date:** Fall 2007

**Type:** Improved Use of Data  
Institutional Effectiveness  
Institutional Research  
Program Evaluation Process

**Intervention Description:**

The first year plan included gathering and analyzing data on students' and counselors' perceptions of the process of placement testing and on the testing environment. In addition, faculty feedback on placement effectiveness was collected.

A focus group was conducted with counselors and advisors on April 3, 2008. It is intended that this feedback will provide data to be used to improve the testing and related advisement process. Significant time was spent in finding a qualified focus group facilitator who had experience in qualitative research design. The session results have been uploaded but because of the delay in identifying the researcher, the evaluation and improvement planning has not taken place. That process will be completed by the end of June 2008.

A survey of students who had taken the placement testing during the Spring 2008 semester was used to collect feedback from students about the testing and advisement process. The survey was designed by early spring but there were difficulties in getting the computerized version set up and then piloting the instrument. Consequently, the survey will be piloted during April 2008; changes made to ensure integrity and internal validity of the instrument will follow; and full administration will occur during the first month of the Fall 2008 term. Students who participated in placement testing in the Fall 2008 and who are enrolled in the learning frameworks courses will be surveyed.

In preparation for a fall 2008 evaluation of the cut scores for several placement instruments, faculty feedback on appropriateness of placement was conducted at the beginning of the Spring 2008 semester. This data is uploaded as part of this report.

**Briefly describe your evaluation strategy and discuss the outcome measures you are using. Be sure to clearly describe the expected measurable changes (e.g. change after 2 and 4 years) as result of the intervention.**

The outcomes were incorporated with the overall student success outcomes that are outlined in the program plan (Learning Frameworks Intervention) and include the following: increased course completion and grade levels, increased semester-to-semester retention, and increased goal completion.

Some of the evaluation of testing, related advisement processes, and the test environment will occur by July 2008. In addition, the feedback from the student survey will be evaluated with recommendations for improvement developed by October 30, 2008.

Two factors resulted in changes in the original time lines. First, there was difficulty identifying a qualified focus group facilitator. Second, there was a problem with the development of the computerized version of the student survey. The pilot has now been completed and included bringing together students that represented the overall population. The students were questioned about the overall survey questions including the amount of time it took to complete the survey, whether or not there were unclear instructions, ambiguous wording, confusing questions, questions that were too difficult to answer, and if there were questions they did not like answering. The questionnaire was reviewed, identifying issues and determining if there were questions that should have been asked that were not. A total of 23 students were included in the pilot. On average, it took students 10 minutes to complete the survey. Based on the comments the following changes will be made:

1. Add names of other instruments used for placement, such as ACT, SAT, etc.
2. Changed wording in items to be more specific
3. Review target population for time frame for when testing occurred (and potentially related questions)
4. Improvement of directions and message when survey is completed

**Upload a file that documents intervention outcomes disaggregated by appropriate subgroups, this file should provide data that clearly demonstrates the impact of the intervention and be directly related to the evaluation strategy noted above. If this is a new intervention you are encourage to load base line data to better describe the population of interest. (Maximum size is 4 MB)**

Uploaded file (April 26, 2008): Student Placement Improvement Intervention Data.doc

# AtD Preliminary Data Report

## Faculty Perceptions of Placement Testing

### April, 2008

**Goal:** As part of the process of evaluating placement test cut scores at Brazosport College, the AtD intake and placement committee surveyed faculty in English and Math during the third week of the Spring 2008 semester. Faculty were asked to provide their perceptions of the accuracy of placement of those students who specifically tested into their classes.

**Instrument:** The instrument used to gather perceptions of course placement is attached. It includes fields for student name, identification number, evaluations of correct course placement, and a space for comments.

#### Population sampled:

- 20 faculty were solicited to participate
  - 12 Math faculty
  - 8 English faculty
- A total of 123 students were evaluated
  - 5 students were dropped from analyses due to non-attendance
- A total of 35 sections were surveyed

#### Response Rate:

- 100% of all faculty responded to the survey

#### Courses Evaluated:

Course	Course Title
MATH 0404	Pre-Algebra
MATH 0406	Beginning Algebra
MATH 0408	Intermediate Algebra
MATH 1314	College Algebra
ENGL 0406	Developmental Reading I
ENGL 0409	English Fundamentals
ENGL 1301	Composition & Rhetoric I

### Overview of Survey Data

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>PLACED CORRECTLY</b>	<b>NOT PLACED CORRECTLY</b>	<b>PLACED TOO HIGH</b>	<b>PLACED TOO LOW</b>
<b>Overall</b>	121 (86.4%)	19 (13.6%)	16 (84.2%)	3 (15.8%)
<b>All Math</b>	55 (75.3%)	18 (24.7%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)
<b>All English</b>	66 (98.5%)	1 (1.5%)	0	1 (100.0%)
<b>MATH 0404</b>	23 (95.8%)	1 (4.2%)	0	1 (100.0%)
<b>MATH 0406</b>	22 (73.3%)	8 (26.7%)	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)
<b>MATH 0408</b>	8 (66.7%)	4 (33.3%)	4 (100.0%)	0
<b>MATH 1314</b>	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)	5 (100.0%)	0
<b>ENGL 0406</b>	17 (94.4%)	1 (5.6%)	0	1 (100.0%)
<b>ENGL 0409</b>	14 (100%)	0	0	0
<b>ENGL 1301</b>	32 (100%)	0	0	0

**Note:** Detailed data will be reviewed by the intake and placement committee in future meetings

Brazosport College  
Focus Group Report  
April 2, 2008  
Compiled and Reported  
By  
Edwina L. Trout, Ph.D.  
Keysource Workplace Solutions

A focus group was conducted with the Brazosport College counselors to ascertain their opinions and concerns about and their recommendations for academic advisement and testing procedures. Following is a summary of data collected. Random names have been assigned to participants to protect anonymity.

**Testing and Placement**

The counselors generally believe that the overall testing process is working well and is a good predictor of student success in academic coursework. As Joe said, “I like the THEA and I tell kids I find it to be pretty accurate. I know for sure that people who have a lot of trouble passing it are gonna have trouble in class.” Gloria adds, “I have a student who took the THEA over and over, then took the COMPASS. She did this over a period of a year, so you know she wasn’t rushing into it. She finally barely passed and she is now barely passing the class. If they fail the tests, we know they are not ready for college work now.”

Even though counselors agree that placement test scores accurately predict student success, most also believed that a number of other factors are also extremely important. As Julie stated, “THEA results are relevant in placing students, of course, but I feel the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory could help. I mean, the THEA is good for reading, writing and math but there are other components.” Sam expressed concern about the time needed to administer these tests saying, “If we tested every student that came in, I don’t know if that’s reasonable. When I was doing career counseling and using those instruments it was in small groups.”

Life issues were also discussed as factors in student success with maturity, responsibility and discipline playing large roles. Additionally, counselors expressed frustration about helping students understand the time commitment needed for

college coursework. As Julie said, “The THEA and COMPASS may take a look at the academic issues but we all know that, particularly with our non-traditional students, it doesn’t even begin to gauge the other factors that make them perhaps not ready for college work.”

Adds Bill, “By the time they get here they are like, you know, ‘I want to take four classes,’ when they don’t really have that many hours in their life to squeeze them in. They see it on paper and they think one class doesn’t seem like anything. I wish there were a test to help them gauge how much time they really have to devote to a class. They sign up for a lot of classes and then they end up dropping most of their hours.” Jane believes competing priorities set students up to fail saying, “We had a student success project awhile back where we met with students having a GPA below 2.0 and talked to them about what is going on. The problem inevitably was working. Some were working 40 hours a week with a family and kids on top of that.”

Joe agreed saying, “I had a student yesterday who wanted to take the maximum amount of classes in the summer and I knew it wouldn’t work because she had a family and was working fulltime. But I couldn’t be that blunt with her because I didn’t want to be a scary counselor. She was kind of fragile.”

Counselors expressed concern about “special needs” students whom they believe are “super at risk”. Says Sam, “We are in community college where everyone who has a problem comes. The people who don’t have problems are by and large going to universities because they can get in and because they have financial aid or parental support, they have good ACT/SAT scores and they have been on the college track in high school. We get the other folks and yet we are judged on our completion rate; how many did we get to complete a certificate or degree. I think our success rate should be judged in a totally different way. If we can get a student through those construction safety site classes (yea, success!) that might be completion.”

When asked if students were given any goal-setting information or practice, Jane said, “We have a five-step model and we have an intake form that we are supposed to check off; what we did for them and where they are in the process. Have they decided on a major or are they exploring careers. Are they finished and looking for a job—it’s that kind of model. We were really into it at one point because we had the Title V grant and we had extra personnel. But then we lost the Title V grant and the personnel so it kind of languished a little bit but it was our attempt at tracking somebody through a model all the way out the door and into a job.” Gloria added, “I think you found that where there was some kind of intervention, students had a significantly higher retention rate.”

Counselors were asked about logistics of the testing process and managing the expectations of entering students completing those tests. Flexibility was agreed to be a major strength of the process. Said Gloria, "I think we do a good job of offering the tests at all kinds of hours. You can register for the test right there at the very front of the college and you don't have to go to the bowels of the college to find somebody. I think we do an excellent job." Adds Bill, "I think this has been brainstormed so many different ways and so many things have been tried and we've seen success sometimes and sometimes we end up reverting back to where we were because it didn't work out. What we have going is pretty good right now."

### **Placement Testing Concerns**

Scheduling of the THEA was identified as an issue of concern. As Julie said, "The only negative I have heard is that no one ever seems to answer the phone when people call to schedule. I've had several people tell me that." Bill explained the phone process saying, "The way it's designed if someone calls 230-3040 it goes to Corrina first; if that line is busy it goes over to Patricia Solis and if that line is busy, it goes over to Terri and if that line is busy it swings back up to Corrina or it goes into voicemail and then Patricia checks the voicemail daily and returns calls." Several counselors agreed that whether a call is answered depends on when they call and how long they allow the phone to ring.

Cheating on the placement tests was briefly discussed as a possible concern but there was not widespread agreement that this is a problem.

Concern was also expressed about student preparedness for the placement tests. Jane worried about students having that information prior to testing. She said, "I give them information about getting ready for the test so they can do as well as they can so they don't have to spend a lot of time in transitional classes. We know that the lower they start, the less of a chance that they are going to be able to complete their education and even get to college level. If you start at our lowest level of math, your chances of completing college algebra are probably less than 20%. You want to help them so you tell them to please study for the test so that we are dealing with good results and we aren't wasting your time and your money. The frustrating thing is that you know a lot of community college students wait until the very end to register and we don't have a lot of time to work with them. Sometimes they are not pleased with their test results but they are what they are and we have to work with it." Adds Gloria, "We ought to be able to tell kids that it is good to be able to start out where you are because those developmental classes are so good and the teachers are so good and helpful that they will help you learn and move up but I don't know how to say that without sounding ugly."

## **Managing Student Expectations**

Julie discussed managing expectations saying, “You know, I’m empathetic in a sense that I usually talk to them like I understand it’s kinda frustrating and I know you were successful in this area of high school but the truth is, based on these test scores, you didn’t quite obtain the information you needed to know and we want to see you be successful. If you don’t have this basic information the chances of you being successful are not good. But some people are just not happy and then you get the parent calling and you have to do it all over again.” Adds Jane, “There’s a balance between trying not to squelch their enthusiasm or their desire to get an education and better themselves and being realistic about their expectations.”

The practice tests were generally agreed to be very helpful to students. Jane said, “I always refer students to the practice tests on the websites. But the COMPASS book and website aren’t all that good.” Adds Joe, “I tell the students to use the THEA website for the COMPASS test because it’s the same material. I think we put in the brochure to go to the website that has Jeff Detrick’s modules. Not just the sample problems but a short video on how to do each of the problems.”

Counselors also agreed that heavy enrollment times exacerbate the problems of managing expectations. Joe expressed concerns about trying to “do it all” during the “crunched time scenario” and said, “We don’t have the hour that it takes to tell them everything they need to know.” Sam warned that “On the other hand, the flip side of that is if you don’t take care of it right at the first visit someone has to clean up your mess, or the student may be lost or even go away and not come back.” Bill observed that, “If you come on August 15<sup>th</sup>, it’s scary around here.”

Problems appear to arise when counselors forget to give new students all of the information needed to enroll. Jane said, “We’ve developed a check list to help us not forget some things but it’s probably not unusual for someone to forget something. The student will come in and see another counselor and it’s like ‘the other one didn’t tell me about that,’ well, I’m sure because there’s fifteen other things we’ve got to tell you about. But there are a hundred other students waiting and you sort of get into a fuzz as the day goes on, just people after people.”

All believed that it is critical to give entering students the best possible career advisement even in the heavy enrollment times. Gloria talked about students who come to enroll and have apparently selected their majors saying, “They come in and say they want to do this or that and sometimes we take them at face value and just plop them in the classes. But if you just ask a couple of questions about how they

selected that major you find out like, ‘my mom said it would be a great career for me’. Sometimes you have to get them on a better track because it’s easy not to go to class or skip or not stick with it if you’re not excited about the end.”

### **Data Collection**

Counselors agreed that placement tests and career counseling were only part of the total picture of student success but they weren’t certain what other factors were present. When asked if information on students who drop out of classes was gathered, Joe said, “We have a group of students who make calls for us and they will call folks that for instance, have applied to the college but for some reason did not enroll or applied and enrolled but did not pay or dropped out during different parts of the process. We typically call them and try to find out what happened and what prevented them from taking the next step. Sometimes we’re not able to connect with everybody but we do leave messages. Dr. Davenport gathers that data every semester.”

When asked what is done with the information, Julie said, “We don’t get it. It probably doesn’t filter down to us.” Jane observed, “I have seen it once –I think I saw a pie chart and it said stuff like work and other reasons they decided not to come.” Dual credit student success and persistence appear to be monitored more closely because, “it’s a really big deal to the high schools.” However, this information apparently is not shared with college staff.

### **Counselor Recommendations**

Counselors were asked if they believed data could be gathered to assist them in refining the placement and enrollment process thus further ensuring student success. Sam thought that was possible saying, “Our numbers went down as far as not just dual credit but in general the whole campus and Dr. Davenport did ask if we know what happened, can you give any explanation? So I went to each and every student basically and wrote down ‘this is what occurred with this student, this is what happened’ and I found out that it wasn’t really any fault of the school, it was just circumstances.”

When asked if counselors believed there was any place where the process could be “tweaked” to make it better, Julie cited the withdrawal form completion. “On our withdrawal form, the student or counselor can check the reason why they are withdrawing and there is a line for ‘other’. I don’t think we pay much attention. The form just comes and we’re busy and the enrollment specialist says, ‘sign this’ and you just do it. But that’s one spot where everybody could take a couple of minutes

and just make sure they've checked the reason and made a note on it. And it would be a deeper place to start capturing the data because the form is already in place and it's just a matter of taking the time to record it somewhere."

Sam thought that perhaps the process could parallel that of the BISD saying, "They have a parent guardian survey that's online that they do every two years and it's a really good survey. It gives a place for parents to type in all kinds of comments and they really address the problems. If there are a whole bunch of negative comments they get right on it. You know, the college could do that. We could publicize it and put it online." Jane worried that students don't have enough information to evaluate the process saying, "I don't know how you would figure out if the students were happy with the registration process or the counseling the process because they don't know the difference."

When asked if the process could be standardized Bill addressed the enormous numbers of phone calls that come in. "I think we looked at one three-month period a couple of years ago and during that time we had 20,000 calls coming into the counseling department and we have five fulltime counselors. Students feel like we're an institution and they come in and they are just overwhelmed. It's the same when a phone call comes in. If the phone doesn't get answered or it gets shuffled around and the end person is me because someone thought I could answer the question—if I don't return the call—well, that's bad. And then the student gives up."

Counselors were then asked if process changes could be made that would enhance their effectiveness during heavy enrollment times. Sam believed that it was important for counselors to take regular breaks to keep them from becoming frazzled. "I think it would be a good thing during heavy enrollment periods to take regular breaks. Sometimes I might not come across very well because I might be kind of fuzzy and get confused after I have seen a whole bunch of students. But we feel like we can't because there are people waiting and phones ringing." Jane added, "But we really need to because otherwise we can make mistakes."

Counselors cited Alvin Community College saying that their counselors don't answer phones during heavy peak times—the switchboard doesn't even ring them in and they don't do career counseling during that time as well. Asked if they believed that model would work at Brazosport, Sam said, "Maybe it would be good not to do career counseling during that time but it almost behooves you to do some career counseling because you don't know if they are technical or academic. You almost have to get into it and once you are in then you are in it. I guess you could tell them that during this time we can't do career counseling but we can talk about some basics."

Educating students about the enrollment process appeared to be very important to the counselors. Joe described the process, “We tell them, here’s your catalog and it’s your degree plan. Don’t go pick one up for next year for the same degree. Take it home and check things off as you take them and then you will know what you have and what you lack. And then I tell them to come in early—don’t wait until June or July.”

Gloria suggested a counselor flyer handout that we could give them as soon as they register to see a counselor. They could look at it while they are waiting. It would tell them, ‘it would help the advising process go a lot smoother if you have done these things prior to going in to see a counselor. Please look at the schedule, look at the variety of classes that are offered and begin to think about what times are going to be better for you. A little tips brochure we assume they know but they don’t. The reality is since we get a thousand new students a year, we are constantly in training mode.’ Jane added, “What if they had all of their things done and could see an express counselor? That would be something in it for them.”

### **Orientation**

Orientation was seen as a possible solution to making students more independent during the enrolment process. Bill said, “The kids have to do an orientation in which they are present here on campus. Maybe in that orientation they can sit down and practice doing an actual schedule before they ever come in here. They could look at the individual columns in the schedule book and the section numbers.” Joe added, “I’m sorry but orientation talks about the stupidest stuff. There are a lot of important things that are not mentioned, like how to use the online registration system and what’s available to you on the website so you’re not calling me asking for an email address. We need to use orientation to make them more responsible.”

When asked how that might be accomplished, Joe continued, “If you sit them down with a schedule and a catalog and say, ‘you are going to register right now, you’re going to fill your schedule, you’re going to go over to that computer and register,’ and have them do it with help in the room, just one time and they’ve got it. And explain to them that here’s the degree plan you’re going to follow and it’s best to start out with the classes at the top and work your way through because they are laid out in a logical sequence but then be sure to check prerequisites, that’s logical and I think they would understand that.”

## **The Student as Customer**

Counselors were asked to describe situations in which students received less than satisfactory customer service. Sam expressed concern about difficulty locating student transcripts during the enrollment process last fall. “You’re trying to advise a student and gather all the information like testing and transcripts. There was a glitch in the registrar’s office because they were not imaging transcripts as they were coming in. Transcripts were stacking up so as you are trying to advise somebody, you’ve gotta go track down those transcripts. Dig though, I mean. The registrar’s office is saying that it could be in that stack or it might be over there, go check with Millie or check with Maria and the student is standing there going, ‘you can’t find my transcript’. There are five places it could be and you have to look everywhere. I think we’ve got it fixed, though.”

Jane talked about a problem at the beginning of the current semester. “Dual credit students who were enrolled in ENGL 1301 weren’t being allowed to register for ENGL 1302 because they hadn’t finished ENGL 1301. I think it was one person in Admissions who wasn’t letting them enroll. So they come to me after a couple of weeks and I have to tell them to call and find out who is telling them that and get it all straightened out. Someone thought the students were supposed to get a letter from the instructor saying that they were doing OK in ENGL 1301 (which has never been done). So by the time I got it straightened out, they didn’t get into the classes they wanted.”

When asked if the problem was resolved, Sam continued, “I hope so, I think so, you can never tell. I talked to Patricia Leyendecker and I talked to Millie but Millie wasn’t the person who was doing it, so I talked to Donna and I talked to Mary. And the unfortunate thing is, maybe we got it resolved but we may need to go back and remind them. I hope we’re all on the same page.”

Computer glitches led to some frustration for some counselors particularly with respect to self-advised students. Jane explained saying, “I have had a lot of students that call and tell me they need clearance but they have been here for two or three semesters and they are still not coming up as self-advised. They should be but they have trouble registering every semester because of some glitch or something. There are some nursing students who no longer need math but they come up every time needing clearance.”

Apparently, these computer glitches also cause problems for new students. Julie related a story about a student she was advising who said he wanted to come the previous semester but when he tried to register online he was told he had to apply

again. It had been over a year since he applied but that kept him from registering for that term. Julie said, “We have all those signs out on the street saying ‘register online’ and a lot of people can’t do that. There wasn’t enough information online telling him to re-register. There should be a little pop-up window or something.”

When asked what counselors believe is the biggest dissatisfier for students, Bill said, “I think it’s just being identified to take the test, period. Oh my gosh, I have to pay \$29 and if I fail it I have to take all these courses that are not college credit. I’m really glad we renamed the remedial classes because there’s a stigma attached.”

### **Learning Frameworks**

The Learning Frameworks class received mixed reviews from counselors. Sam believes it’s the most positive course offered at the college while Joe says that criteria for placement in the class is too arbitrary. He says, “Not everyone who is enrolled in remediation fits that mold. Someone might come in with 15 credits from out of state and we test them because they didn’t have a college math class. So they have to take a remedial class and we’re going to make them take a learning frameworks class.” When asked if it was possible to obtain a waiver, Julie said, “Yes, but it’s an act of God. You better see the Pope first and her name is Dr. Villanueva.”

When asked if that was good, counselors agreed that it would be a very complicated process. “Even then,” said Gloria, “she would still want the final say because in part, it’s a numbers game. But I think we do fill classes at the expense of student satisfaction.” Joe added, “When we first started it, it was just people coming into the college who were TSI liable. But they didn’t fill the classes so it became students that were one step above and it was still not enough so now it’s every single student no matter where he started who is TSI liable, no matter if they have college credit and have been successful.” Bill agreed saying, “Even if they are on their last math class and they have taken many hours before that, we are still telling them they have to do it. And even if they can only take one class and it has to be anatomy because they are not going to get into that nursing class unless they have anatomy, they have to take Learning Frameworks. This makes me so mad I could just spit.”

All of that being said, counselors did believe that the Learning Frameworks class is worthwhile. “The other side of this is that we go to these meetings and we just came back from one where they’re talking about student success courses. They are saying that you have to make it mandatory because students do not do optional. So it may be one of those things that we know what’s best for them. It would be nice to get some feedback from the students about how they feel about the class,” said Gloria.

Others agreed, saying, “They are getting something out of the class that is getting them to do their schedules early.” Bill believes that the class is helping but there is not yet enough information to say definitively. Others believe that there should be a bit of flexibility to allow for individual cases.

### **Stretch Goal-Setting**

Finally, counselors were asked about what changes they would make if there were no limitations in terms of resources. Julie responded with, “It’s not realistic but I think if you could actually almost follow a student while they are here and continually check in with them and give them encouragement. You know, make sure everything’s okay. I think you would have an extreme success rate because they would know that somebody cares about them.”

Joe said, “I just went to Sam Houston a couple of weeks ago and one thing they started at their school that they are really thrilled about is a form they created that is online. The teacher can go in and fill out if a student either starts having excessive absences or is doing poorly in their class. The teacher submits the form to the counseling office and they immediately start making calls to try and get that student to come in. They said that in the past year, they had over 1200 students that they contacted in that way and the students did come in. The counselors discussed what’s going on and somehow encouraged them. They have been successful in keeping a lot of students that might have just slipped out the cracks. I don’t know—it would be a lot more work for the counseling group.”

Gloria elicited surprise from the group when she wondered, “What if every time every new student had a mentor, had an advisor that’s their advisor?” “You are in the blue sky!” observed Sam.

Bill thought all new students should take PSYC 1300. “I know that’s three credits that they all have to pay for but it would give them for a year almost a mentor because our three faculty members are so good.”

### **Researcher Impressions and Recommendations**

The researcher was impressed by the dedication of this group of counselors. They appear to be very student-centered and oriented to helping the student population that they serve. They readily answered questions about strengths of the process but appeared to have some difficulty with questions designed to determine weaknesses. In fact, halfway through the process, one counselor said, “You don’t know us but this

is the nicest, sweetest bunch of people who would do anything for students and we sound like big old grippers.”

As is true in many cases, problems identified were process-oriented in nature. Examples cited previously include the missing transcripts in Admissions, problems that students experience when calling to schedule placement testing and students who should be able to self-advise. Improperly functioning processes are one of the leading causes of “non-real” work. “Non-real” work includes unnecessary tasks that do not lead to fulfillment of the organizational mission. “Non-real” work is frequently identified as a major dissatisfier in the workplace. Counselors appear to be dedicated to helping students but dislike having to fix problems with the system. This frustration is only exacerbated during heavy enrollment times. All processes should be evaluated periodically to determine that they still work properly, to revise if necessary or to ensure that they are still needed.

As reported, there appear to be mixed feelings regarding the Learning Frameworks class. While counselors seem to believe that it is beneficial, they nevertheless believe that some discretion could be granted in placing students in the class. Additionally, there does seem to be a belief that, in some cases, need for numbers takes precedence over proper placement. Perhaps the criteria for placement could be reviewed and a procedure could be created for allowing appropriate students to bypass the class.

Counselors appear to give students adequate information prior to placement testing but, because students may enter at several different points, this information does not always get to them at the beginning of the process. Because it is important that students earn a score commiserate with their actual academic abilities, it may be useful to evaluate how students access testing information to ensure they are fully prepared.

Finally, any information gathered concerning student persistence or lack thereof, should be shared with counselors. Most counselors believed that students dropped classes because of work or home issues. That being said, they did describe a few situations where students left because of system problems. Student satisfaction data can be used to evaluate processes (as described above) and modify where appropriate.