



Following last week's **Fact Sheet**, there were several requests for a clarification of terms. So, by popular demand and especially because Joan

Henry asked for it, here are some definitions.

Definitions from the Achieving the Dream (AtD) Initiative (*Leadership and Teams*, p. 10)

A *core team* (including the president, chief academic officer, chief student services officer, institutional research director, faculty leaders and others) identifies existing values, assumptions, structures and systems at the college that nurture and impede student success. The team considers leverage points to improve student outcomes, and it leads a process for setting institutional priorities, goals and strategies.

A *data team* (including the institutional research director, faculty, staff and others) develops a candid analysis of the college's performance with respect to student outcomes, with a special focus on low-income students, students of color and others who face barriers to success. It examines quantitative [and qualitative] data and presents it in a clear and compelling way to show where the college is doing well and where it needs to improve.

In addition to the core team and data team, the college may appoint specialized *strategy task forces* [the Student Success Committee for starters; see the next page for their names and mandate] to explore and develop strategies in particular areas, such as math or English instruction, financial aid, counseling, cultural competency for faculty or any number of other areas.

Plain and simple language (our own definitions)

Cohort: a group of students who arrived at NPCC for the first time in a certain semester. For the initiative, Brad's team has submitted

data for first-time, degree-seeking enrollees (part-time and full-time, including transfer students) from Fall 2004, Fall 2005, and Fall 2006.

Gatekeeper course: The first college-level or degree-credit course in a given subject area. These may also be credit courses that have high enrollment. See the list on the next page.

Successful course completion: A "C" or better is considered successful completion for AtD. Grades of "W, D, or F" are considered failing.

Great College Workshop: Twice during the academic year, administrators, faculty and staff members will meet to reflect on the goals and values of AtD and its impact on NPCC and to develop and sell the vision for our future. This sort of gathering is mandated by first-year requirements of AtD.

Focus Groups: A method of gathering qualitative data to supplement our quantitative data submissions. **Stephanie Coke** will be at PTC on Thursday and Friday (Sept. 20 - 21) to be trained by AtD Focus Group Trainer, Ken Gonzales (from San Diego State University). She will return to campus to train faculty and staff in conducting focus groups. These groups will be used to gather qualitative data regarding effective programs as well as obstacles to student success.

Data-driven decision-making: This is the key ingredient in a **culture of inquiry, evidence, and accountability** (one of the core values of AtD). In this culture, we will make decisions and allocate resources based on evidence of what is working and what is not. Administrators, faculty, and staff across the institution examine evidence and engage in frank discussions about outcomes for different student populations. Then, we will set measurable goals for improvement and use the data to assess our progress toward these goals.

Other AtD core values include **student-centered vision, equity and excellence**.

Just in case you're wondering, here are the numbers for our eighteen largest classes over the past three fall terms. Brad compiled this list for an analysis of our gatekeeper courses. The enrollment numbers are for all three cohort groups combined.

Gatekeeper Information

Course	# Students	Success Rate
Comp I	2122	71%
Intro to Psych	1809	64%
College Algebra	1667	66%
Comp II	1540	76%
Intro to Sociology	1501	64%
Biology	1048	59%
Speech	950	77%
Anat & Phys I	989	61%
Medical Terminology	791	71%
Spanish I	652	73%
Chem Non-Majors I	612	85%
Philosophy	589	71%
Anat & Phys II	585	77%
Western Civ I	540	74%
US Hist I	498	73%
Western Civ II	467	79%
US Hist II	420	74%
Amer Natl Govt	418	67%

Interesting stuff, eh?

Student Success Committee and its Role

Maggie and Gordon co-chair this group. Members of the committee are Mark Bradley, Joan Henry, Jackie Holloway, Dana Murphy, Becky White, Ann Bragg, Van Davis, John Dodd, John Tucker, Mary Kay Wurm, Pam Buenau, Ron Chesser, Kitty Conrad, Becky Linsky, and Kay Anthony.

The Roles and Responsibilities of this committee are:

1. To review, explore, collect and provide information about what other institutions do to improve and enhance student success and about what research recommends as effective student success strategies.
2. To explore or study what avenues other community colleges are using to promote student success.

3. To assist in the collection and analysis of data about the success of NPCC students.
4. To assist with data presentations and discussions with divisions and other groups of NPCC staff and sharing the results of those discussions.
5. To assist in making recommendations for projects, programs, and/or policies that will enhance the success of NPCC students.

For this fall's work, the committee will focus on gathering information about:

Instruction related

- Supplemental instruction
- Problem-based Learning
- Learning Communities
- Strategic Teaching
- Just in Time Teaching

Foundations of Excellence

(this program focuses on the First Year Experience)

Data on the AtD website

- What are other AtD colleges doing to decrease gaps in:
- retention
 - graduation rates
 - developmental education
 - course success rates
 - gatekeeper courses

Psychological Factors affecting success

Locus of control

Okay, everyone, here's the last call for communication information. Please let us know how you like to hear about NPCC's work with the initiative. Here's a factoid:

Fewer than fifteen percent of those listed on the ZAllstaff distribution list have replied to our request for communication preferences.

We're easy. Just drop us a note, send us an email, pick up the phone, beat out your preference on a drum. Thanks.