

**Metropolitan  
Community College  
Omaha, Nebraska**

**PACE Student Success Report**  
PACE Climate Survey for Community Colleges

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## Student Success Literature Review

Community colleges play a vital role in U.S. higher education, enrolling nearly one-third of students in degree-granting institutions each year (Dougherty et al., 2017). In recent years, community colleges have faced increasing pressure to improve student outcomes (Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, 2017; Bailey, 2016). This emphasis on student success has been driven by a combination of factors, including rapid changes in student demographics, concerns about persistent inequities in educational attainment and achievement, changing economic and workforce needs, reduced funding for public higher education, and general concerns about educational quality (Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, 2017; Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; Kinzie & Kuh, 2016).

To enhance student outcomes, community colleges must develop, apply, and measure progress against a clear definition of student success. Myriad definitions exist that include a wide range of concerns, from graduation and completion to persistence and retention, student engagement, and equity and diversity, among others (Astin, 1977, 1984, 1985, 1993; Barefoot, 2008; Hurtado et al., 2012; Kuh et al., 2010; Museus, 2013; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Rendón & Munoz, 2011; Tinto, 1993; Tinto & Pusser, 2006). While many community college leaders conceptualize student success in terms of degree and certification completion rates, greater demands for accountability across a variety of metrics have led many leaders to take a more holistic view of student success (Jenkins & Fink, 2016). For example, nearly all community colleges prioritize improving the outcomes of historically underserved students (Rodriguez, 2015). Further, in response to employers' observations about skills gaps among college graduates (Carnevale et al., 2012; Carnevale et al., 2011; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014), many community college leaders have progressively turned their attention to assessing labor market outcomes and better preparing students for the workforce (Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, 2017). Some community colleges have begun to track transfer and bachelor's degree attainment rates more systematically (Jenkins & Fink, 2016). In short, many community colleges have come to define student success not only by what students achieve during college, but also afterwards. As the Aspen Institute (2017) notes, "Exceptional community colleges align programs with good post-graduation opportunities, ensure that students have the broad and specific skills they will need after graduating, regularly check to make sure that the intended student outcomes are in fact achieved after graduation, and use systematic feedback from employers and university partners to update and improve their programs" (p. 4).

To develop a Student Success subscale best suited for community colleges, the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research adopted the Aspen Institute's definition of student success, focusing on four principal areas: completion, equity, labor market, and learning. According to the Aspen Institute (2017), "These four measures of excellence are not stand-alone metrics of performance; rather, they are interdependent parts of a definition of community college excellence that is student-centered and that reflects the reality that community college is not a final destination for students but a springboard to a wide array of opportunities after they transfer or graduate" (p.12).

The table below provides further description of the four key areas of student success:

Completion	Ensuring that students earn associate's degrees and other meaningful credentials, as well as bachelor's degrees after they transfer.
Equity	Ensuring equity in access and in learning, completion, and labor market success for minority, low-income, and other historically underserved students.
Labor Market	Ensuring that graduates find and maintain employment that provides a family-sustaining wage after completion of a degree or credential, and using labor market outcomes to improve programs.
Learning	Setting high expectations for what students should learn, measure whether they are doing so, and using that information to engage faculty in improving teaching and curricula.

Source: <https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/about/>

Using the PACE Student Success subscale, community college leaders have an opportunity to gain insight into employee perspectives regarding their institution's performance on critical student outcomes.

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**Table 1. Student Success Frequency Distributions**

*MCC compared with:*

Student Success	Response Option	MCC		Large		PACE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>							
<b>1</b> labor market outcomes for students are shared within this institution	Very dissatisfied	14	3%	84	2%	341	4%
	Dissatisfied	51	12%	285	8%	1136	12%
	Neither	147	34%	932	28%	2969	32%
	Satisfied	148	34%	1303	39%	3278	36%
	Very satisfied	69	16%	774	23%	1505	16%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3378</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9229</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>2</b> this institution tracks student employment after they leave this institution	Very dissatisfied	41	11%	109	3%	476	6%
	Dissatisfied	72	19%	261	8%	1108	13%
	Neither	154	40%	1000	31%	3158	37%
	Satisfied	74	19%	1126	35%	2627	30%
	Very satisfied	41	11%	686	22%	1268	15%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3182</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8637</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>3</b> this institution partners with employers and businesses to offer opportunities for students	Very dissatisfied	4	1%	52	1%	208	2%
	Dissatisfied	24	5%	190	5%	731	8%
	Neither	82	17%	722	21%	2307	24%
	Satisfied	212	45%	1530	44%	4219	44%
	Very satisfied	151	32%	1019	29%	2222	23%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3513</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9687</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>4</b> this institution identifies clear pathways to degree completion	Very dissatisfied	20	4%	61	2%	205	2%
	Dissatisfied	54	11%	184	5%	654	6%
	Neither	99	20%	529	14%	1682	16%
	Satisfied	189	39%	1605	43%	4743	46%
	Very satisfied	125	26%	1335	36%	2956	29%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3714</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10240</b>	<b>100%</b>



*MCC compared with:*

Student Success (continued)	Response Option	MCC		Large		PACE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>							
<b>5</b> this institution has resources to help undecided students find a pathway	Very dissatisfied	19	4%	82	2%	279	3%
	Dissatisfied	54	11%	229	6%	893	9%
	Neither	103	22%	793	22%	2480	25%
	Satisfied	178	38%	1456	41%	4041	41%
	Very satisfied	116	25%	1007	28%	2135	22%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3567</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9828</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>6</b> this institution uses completion rates as a metric for program success	Very dissatisfied	24	6%	110	3%	286	3%
	Dissatisfied	40	9%	168	5%	626	7%
	Neither	138	32%	811	23%	2739	29%
	Satisfied	150	35%	1425	41%	3816	40%
	Very satisfied	79	18%	988	28%	1963	21%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3502</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9430</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>7</b> this institution regularly assesses learning outcomes in individual courses	Very dissatisfied	12	3%	84	3%	247	3%
	Dissatisfied	31	8%	187	6%	615	7%
	Neither	123	31%	715	21%	2437	27%
	Satisfied	166	42%	1427	42%	3856	42%
	Very satisfied	68	17%	946	28%	2037	22%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3359</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9192</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>8</b> this institution regularly assesses learning outcomes for programs	Very dissatisfied	12	3%	78	2%	232	3%
	Dissatisfied	28	7%	157	5%	598	7%
	Neither	108	27%	741	22%	2439	27%
	Satisfied	184	46%	1451	43%	3919	43%
	Very satisfied	69	17%	933	28%	2012	22%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3360</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9200</b>	<b>100%</b>

*MCC compared with:*

Campus Safety Climate (continued)	Response Option	MCC		Large		PACE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>							
<b>9</b> this institution regularly assesses learning outcomes across the college	Very dissatisfied	13	3%	79	2%	256	3%
	Dissatisfied	31	8%	171	5%	663	7%
	Neither	121	30%	822	25%	2707	30%
	Satisfied	175	44%	1397	42%	3707	40%
	Very satisfied	61	15%	871	26%	1831	20%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3340</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9164</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>10</b> this institution disaggregates its data to show how programs serve different groups of students	Very dissatisfied	22	6%	123	4%	416	5%
	Dissatisfied	38	10%	263	8%	975	11%
	Neither	145	38%	1030	32%	3200	36%
	Satisfied	131	34%	1123	35%	2837	32%
	Very satisfied	45	12%	706	22%	1372	16%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3245</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8800</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>11</b> this institution demonstrates a commitment to equity	Very dissatisfied	25	5%	157	4%	475	5%
	Dissatisfied	32	7%	233	6%	798	8%
	Neither	82	17%	661	18%	2205	22%
	Satisfied	199	41%	1470	40%	4059	40%
	Very satisfied	143	30%	1172	32%	2665	26%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3693</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10202</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>12</b> there is a systematic process for identifying at-risk students and reaching out with appropriate interventions	Very dissatisfied	11	3%	138	4%	490	5%
	Dissatisfied	60	14%	328	9%	1161	12%
	Neither	109	25%	733	21%	2453	25%
	Satisfied	174	40%	1330	38%	3551	37%
	Very satisfied	86	20%	987	28%	2005	21%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3516</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9660</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2. Student Success Item Mean Comparisons**

Student Success		<i>MCC compared with:</i>						
		MCC		Large			PACE Normbase	
		N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.
<i>The extent to which...</i>								
<b>1</b>	labor market outcomes for students are shared within this institution	429	3.483	3.710	***	-.229	3.484	
<b>2</b>	this institution tracks student employment after they leave this institution	382	3.005	3.635	***	-.612	3.359	*** -.335
<b>3</b>	this institution partners with employers and businesses to offer opportunities for students	473	4.019	3.932			3.776	*** .255
<b>4</b>	this institution identifies clear pathways to degree completion	487	3.708	4.069	***	-.383	3.937	*** -.241
<b>5</b>	this institution has resources to help undecided students find a pathway	470	3.677	3.863	***	-.188	3.698	
<b>6</b>	this institution uses completion rates as a metric for program success	431	3.510	3.860	***	-.352	3.694	*** -.188
<b>7</b>	this institution regularly assesses learning outcomes in individual courses	400	3.618	3.882	***	-.275	3.742	* -.129
<b>8</b>	this institution regularly assesses learning outcomes for programs	401	3.673	3.894	***	-.235	3.748	
<b>9</b>	this institution regularly assesses learning outcomes across the college	401	3.599	3.841	***	-.256	3.676	
<b>10</b>	this institution disaggregates its data to show how programs serve different groups of students	381	3.365	3.624	***	-.253	3.429	
<b>11</b>	this institution demonstrates a commitment to equity	481	3.838	3.885			3.749	
<b>12</b>	there is a systematic process for identifying at-risk students and reaching out with appropriate interventions	440	3.600	3.768	**	-.157	3.561	

\* p <.05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

**Table 3. Mean Comparisons by Personnel Classification**

*MCC compared with:*

What is your personnel classification?	MCC		Large			PACE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	508	3.626	3.832	***	-.261	3.671		
Faculty	127	3.428	3.844	***	-.511	3.714	***	-.355
Administrator	64	3.396	3.920	***	-.665	3.626	*	-.292
Staff	308	3.768	3.814			3.657	*	.145

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

∅ indicates 0 responses

**Table 4. Mean Comparisons by Race/Ethnicity**

*MCC compared with:*

Please select the race/ethnicity that best describes you?	MCC		Large			PACE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	508	3.626	3.832	***	-.261	3.671		
African American or Black	46	3.866	3.892			3.737		
Alaska Native or American Indian	8	3.322	3.499			3.509		
Asian	9	3.661	3.933			3.724		
Hispanic/Latina/o/x	19	3.563	3.940	*	-.476	3.843		
Middle Eastern or North African	0	∅	4.334			4.104		
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	∅	3.982			3.836		
White	378	3.624	3.830	***	-.267	3.679		
Two or more races	17	3.543	3.698			3.486		
Prefer to self-describe	13	3.696	3.636			3.571		

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

∅ indicates 0 responses

**Table 5. Mean Comparisons by Employment Status**

*MCC compared with:*

<b>Your status at this institution is?</b>	<b>MCC</b>		<b>Large</b>			<b>PACE Normbase</b>		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	508	3.626	3.832	***	-.261	3.671		
Full-Time	466	3.617	3.775	***	-.199	3.618		
Part-Time	26	3.988	4.014			3.910		

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

∅ indicates 0 responses

**Table 6. Mean Comparisons by Highest Level of Education Earned**

*MCC compared with:*

What is the highest level of education you have earned?	MCC		Large			PACE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	508	3.626	3.832	***	-.261	3.671		
First Professional degree (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., J.D., D.V.M.)	4	--	3.731			3.556		
Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)	31	3.151	3.632	**	-.533	3.490	*	-.401
Master's degree	178	3.484	3.828	***	-.426	3.665	**	-.228
Bachelor's degree	155	3.725	3.847			3.705		
Associate's degree	63	3.751	3.930			3.810		
Certificate	16	4.029	4.024			3.692		
High School diploma or GED	43	3.899	4.073			3.860		
No diploma or degree	1	--	--			3.703		

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

∅ indicates 0 responses

**Table 7. Mean Comparisons by Gender Identity**

*MCC compared with:*

What is your gender identity?	MCC		Large			PACE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	508	3.626	3.832	***	-.261	3.671		
Man	170	3.682	3.902	***	-.278	3.734		
Woman	302	3.620	3.871	***	-.331	3.714	*	-.123
Trans Man	0	∅	--			2.462		
Trans Woman	0	∅	2.958			3.172		
Gender Queer	4	--	3.560			3.556		
Prefer to self-describe	14	3.262	3.513			3.445		

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

∅ indicates 0 responses



**Table 8. Mean Comparisons by Years at this Institution**

*MCC compared with:*

How many years have you worked at this institution?	MCC		Large			PACE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	508	3.626	3.832	***	-.261	3.671		
5 years or less	209	3.788	3.981	***	-.259	3.792		
6-10 years	106	3.566	3.790	**	-.273	3.605		
11-15 years	69	3.407	3.769	***	-.461	3.618	*	-.275
16-20 years	41	3.253	3.775	***	-.678	3.644	**	-.508
21-25 years	27	3.635	3.743			3.686		
26 years or more	31	3.907	3.757			3.697		

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

∅ indicates 0 responses

**Table 9. Mean Comparisons by Years in Higher Education**

*MCC compared with:*

How many years have you worked in higher education?	MCC		Large			PACE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	508	3.626	3.832	***	-.261	3.671		
5 years or less	159	3.870	4.034	**	-.227	3.866		
6-10 years	96	3.586	3.830	**	-.318	3.641		
11-15 years	76	3.476	3.777	**	-.372	3.617		
16-20 years	54	3.299	3.816	***	-.668	3.656	***	-.462
21-25 years	46	3.521	3.799	*	-.358	3.654		
26 years or more	51	3.683	3.707			3.624		

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

∅ indicates 0 responses

**Table 10. Mean Comparisons by Age**

*MCC compared with:*

What is your age?	MCC		Large			PACE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	508	3.626	3.832	***	-.261	3.671		
29 or younger	19	3.747	4.098			3.843		
30 - 39	62	3.616	3.913	**	-.393	3.682		
40 - 49	115	3.569	3.873	***	-.394	3.674		
50 - 59	123	3.612	3.846	**	-.297	3.711		
60 or older	123	3.783	3.831			3.743		

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

∅ indicates 0 responses