RESULTS
Columbus State has made significant gains in increasing course success rates, retention, program completion, and narrowing equity gaps.

- Currently, 97 percent of new students participate in one or more student success initiatives, with involvement in a minimum of three serving as a tipping point to raise course success rates above 70 percent.
- The course success gap between Black students and White students has narrowed from 22 percent in 2011-12 to 14 percent in 2017-18.
- Furthermore, the college has seen the biggest gains in semester-to-semester retention of students who participate in three or more success initiatives among Black students. From fall 2014 to spring 2015, the retention rate was 68 percent for Black students and 83 percent for White students. Three years later, the rates were, respectively, 81 percent and 84 percent, and a 15 percentage-point gap had narrowed to 3 points.
- College wide, the IPEDS graduation rate increased more than 2.5 times the 2010-11 rate, from 8 percent to 21 percent.
- Columbus State Community College aggressively pursued dual-credit enrollment among at-risk high school populations who were underrepresented in the statewide program. Since 2012-13, the college has seen a 12-fold increase in the total number of high school students participating in dual-credit programs and a fivefold increase in the total number of high school students pursuing dual-credit enrollment among at-risk high school students.

![Graph showing 3-Year Graduation and Graduation + Transfer Out Rates (First-Time, Full-Time Only)](image)

NEXT STEPS
Looking forward, Columbus State has continued its Achieving the Dream work as a Leader College and plans to further improve the student experience by fully implementing Guided Pathways, creating an enterprise structure for the 115 different information technology systems it is using, and by designing more flexible curricular offerings to address working students’ difficulties with the state mandated semester calendar system. At the heart of these efforts are four new design principles for student success:

1. All students will have a clear understanding of their individualized paths to success.
2. All students’ academic, financial, and career plans will be aligned with their goals and filled with clear, comprehensive information on how to succeed, complete, and transition.
3. All students will receive timely, frequent, customized feedback, access to resources, and structured interventions through organized, integrated systems.
4. All students will experience a culture of care reflecting our institutional values and designed to eliminate equity gaps.

"People need an affordable, quality college that leads to good jobs. Columbus State is the answer. Columbus State was a great education. I graduated and transferred to Ohio State. Now I have two degrees and saved more than $20,000. Columbus State prepares so many people for good jobs right here in Central Ohio. They’re paving the way to our region’s future and that’s good for everybody. Thanks Columbus State, you’re making us stronger." —Danielle Sanborn, Admissions Representative & Alumna

Achieving the Dream’s Leah Meyer Austin Award is the highest honor a college in the Achieving the Dream Network can earn. The award recognizes institutional strength, aligned policies and procedures, a student-focused culture, notable increases in student outcomes, and reduction of equity gaps.

“We’ve become a real data-seeking environment through Achieving the Dream, and not just at the leadership level, but throughout each of our academic and student-facing departments.” —Dr. David Harrison, President

OVERVIEW
Columbus State Community College, one of two winners of the 2019 Leah Meyer Austin Award, is being recognized for its focus on student success and its goal of creating a seamless path from high school through to the workforce.

Internally, the college has produced significant gains in course completion, retention, graduation rates, and narrowing equity gaps. College wide, the IPEDS graduation rate increased more than 2.5 times the 2010-11 rate, from 8 percent to 21 percent. More broadly, Columbus State Community College has advanced two other strategic priorities, workforce development and civic engagement, by building key partnerships with high schools, universities, and local industries. It also has been a leader in convening the Central Ohio Compact, a collective strategy aimed at ensuring that 65 percent of the region’s adults will have earned a postsecondary certificate or degree by 2025.

Overall, Columbus State’s transformative work reflects Achieving the Dream’s vision of community colleges as crucial, lifelong sources of civic and economic wellbeing for individuals, their families, and their communities.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ACHIEVING THE DREAM, INC.
Visit www.AchievingtheDream.org or contact us at info@AchievingtheDream.org or call (240) 450-0075
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Achieving the Dream AUSTIN AWARD

2019

LEAH MEYER AUSTIN AWARD

COLUMBUS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SNAPSHOT
Annually, Columbus State Community College serves 46,000 students. Three-quarters (74%) attend part time and nearly two-thirds (64%) are 24 years old or younger. The student population is 59 percent White, 19 percent Black, 5 percent Hispanic, and 4 percent Asian; 47 percent of first-time, full-timebeginning students receive Pell Grants or do 29 percent of the entire school population.

CHALLENGES
In 2010, the city of Columbus and the surrounding Franklin County community were dealing with the effects of the Great Recession. Many out-of-work adults or workers who needed new skills had turned to Columbus State Community College, swelling enrollments and forcing the college administration to focus on finding extra classrooms, faculty, and resources. In addition, Columbus State was taking in more traditional-aged students, more than half of whom, The Columbus Dispatch reported, were not college-ready and needed developmental education courses. This news alarmed taxpayers and the education and business communities alike.

At Columbus State, an active board and engaged faculty and staff were putting focus to promote more attention on student success. The college had just completed a year-long grant to help the college strengthen the first-year student experience. The board had hired a new president, and some board members had accompanied him to a two-week president-and-a-half retreat, the Governance Institute for Student Success. They brought with them college compliance data, some of which had not been analyzed. The deep look at the data was concerning. The institution’s first-time, full-time student three-year graduation rate was 8 percent. More than half of incoming students placed into at least one developmental course. Fall-to-fall persistence rates were weak, and 40 percent of first-time students who enrolled in 2012 returned the following fall. For part-time students, the retention rate was 32 percent. Perhaps most challenging of all, the data raised more questions than they answered. What was behind those poor outcomes and what could the college do about it?

SOLUTIONS
“We were a data-poor institution,” recalls Columbus State Community College President Dr. David Harrison. “We had a college that was working on closing equity gaps, but we lacked an integrating framework.” The college immediately started to invest in data and analysis systems, creating an Office of Institutional Effectiveness and hiring a director. In 2011, 47% of first-time, full-time students who enrolled in 2012 returned the following fall. For part-time students, the retention rate was 32 percent. Perhaps most challenging of all, the data raised more questions than they answered. What was behind those poor outcomes and what could the college do about it?

Ramping up student success interventions
Today, the college has more than 50 interventions, large and small. The college has embedded its work throughout the college, creating an Office of Institutional Effectiveness and hiring a director to lead it. In 2011, it made the pivotal decision to join Achieving the Dream. Early on, the college benefited from its Achieving the Dream coaches, who played a prominent role in helping the college create a new student experience and associated outcomes. “The discipline that Achieving the Dream required around data was an important catalyst for us because it created external accountability,” says Dr. Harrison. “It gave us deadlines to get things done, and then a cohort of colleges to compare ourselves to. These were the early-stage foundational elements to our student success strategy.”

Achieving the Dream’s focus on equity was also a beacon. When he arrived at Columbus State, Dr. Harrison launched a listening tour, visiting with high schools, district superintendents, universities, and local businesses and industry. He learned that no matter whether the regional economy was in boom or bust, lower-income citizens and people of color were disproportionately left behind. Better preparing all Franklin County high school graduates to be college and work-ready was a central concern.

With the impetus of Achieving the Dream, the college created a Student Success Council that included broad, high-level representation across the offices of Academic Affairs, Institutional Effectiveness, and Student Affairs. Columbus State built its own campus-wide engagement by gathering input from more than 200 faculty, staff, and students in forums, focus groups, and brainstorming sessions. From their recommendations emerged six core student success priorities for 2012: closing equity gaps; increasing rates of course success; increasing student retention; and increasing program completion.

Through its increased data capacity and scaled holistic student support interventions, Columbus State has established a culture of excellence in student success. The interventions include application improvements, orientation processes, curriculum redesign, embedded advising, Early Alert was recently opened to allow high schools to follow how their dual enrollment students are doing. Redesigning developmental education
To bolster underprepared students’ ability to earn college credits and promote semester-to-semester persistence, the college recently redesigned developmental education on a co-requisite course model, first in English, and in 2017-18 in math. Students take college-level gateway courses and receive individualized or embedded tutoring for the developmental work they need to master. The results look promising, although it’s too early to report hard data. Meanwhile, the developmental education department work has been merged into content areas, and faculty and staff have participated in related, large-scale professional development.

Disrupting the power of partnerships
The Central Ohio economy is diverse and growing, providing jobs for skilled workers in the financial, healthcare, and manufacturing industries. The most innovative of Dr. Harrison’s conversations with education and business leaders in the region, Columbus State convened a series of facilitated forums involving 150 to 200 people over 18 months. This led, in 2011, to the creation of the Central Ohio Compact, a coalition of more than 50 school districts, universities, and employers committed to the understanding that “regional prosperity is tied to student success, and it can be achieved through the collaboration of education and industry players.” The Compact is a vehicle for K-12, higher education, and industry players to seamlessly collaborate. In addition to convening the Compact, the college launched and maintains a regional dashboard, integrating data from state, high school, postsecondary, and employer sources. Columbus State Community College also has formed a workforce advisory council made up of chief talent officers of Central Ohio companies. It is creating a similar community advisory board to facilitate community responses to students’ nonacademic barriers.

A significant collaboration to grow out of the Compact is the Modern Manufacturing Work-Study program, designed and customized to address locally based Honda North America’s need for a talent pool of workers who can keep up with rapid technological change. In the accelerated learning program, high school students graduate with 18 college credits, attend two semesters at Columbus State Community College, then split the final 12-15 months between the college classroom and on-the-job activities while they earn a salary.

The college has extended a tailored form of this model to other companies in the region.