



SENSE

Survey of Entering Student Engagement

**Phillips Community College
of the University of Arkansas**

**Data Comparison
Fall 2008, Fall 2009 and Fall 2013**

Published Spring 2014



SENSE

Issue 3

Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas

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Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) 2013

Benchmarks are groups of similar survey items that address key areas of entering student engagement. These benchmarks provide an opportunity for institutions to review results of student experiences at the beginning of their education. Sense 2013 includes cohort of colleges who participated in survey 2011-2013.

Benchmarks of Effective Practice with Entering Students

- **Early Connections**
- **High Expectations & Aspirations**
- **Clear Academic Plan and Pathway**
- **Effective Track to College Readiness**
- **Engaged Learning**
- **Academic and Social Support Network**

Early Connections

When students describe their early college experiences, they typically reflect on occasions when they felt discouraged or thought about dropping out. Their reasons for persisting almost always include one common element: a strong, early connection to someone at the college.

High Expectations and Aspirations

Nearly all students arrive at their community colleges intending to succeed and believing that they have the motivation to do so. When entering students perceive clear, high expectations from college staff and faculty are more likely to understand what it takes to be successful and adopt behaviors that lead to achievement. Students then often rise to meet expectations, making it more likely that they will attain their goals. Often, students' aspirations also climb, and they seek more advanced credentials than they originally envisioned.

Clear Academic Plan and Pathway

When a student, with knowledgeable assistance, creates a road map—one that shows where he or she is headed, what academic path to follow, and how long it will take to reach the end goal—that student has a critical tool for staying on track. Students are more likely to persist if they not only are advised about what courses to take, but also are helped to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them.

Effective Track to College Readiness

Nationally, more than six in 10 entering community college students are underprepared for college-level work. Thus, significant improvements in student success will hinge upon effective assessment, placement of students into appropriate courses, and implementation of effective strategies to ensure that students build academic skills and receive needed support.

Engaged Learning

Instructional approaches that foster engaged learning are critical for student success. Because most community college students attend college part-time, and most also must find ways to balance their studies with work and family responsibilities, the most effective learning experiences will be those the college intentionally designs.

Academic and Social Support Network

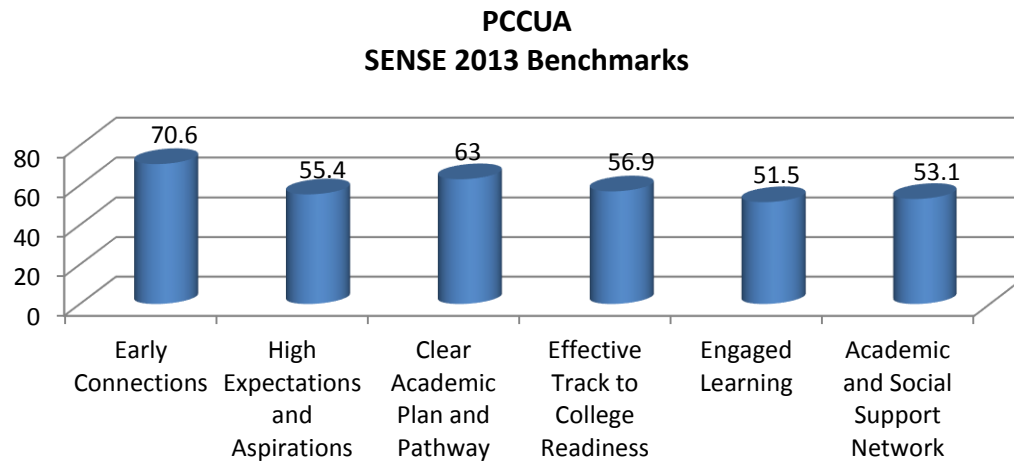
Students benefit from having a personal network that enables them to obtain information about college services, along with the academic and social support critical to student success. Because entering students often don't know what they don't know, colleges must purposefully create those networks. For further information about *SENSE* benchmarks see www.cccse.org.

Benchmark scores are standardized to have a mean of 50 and standard deviation of 25 across all entering student respondents.

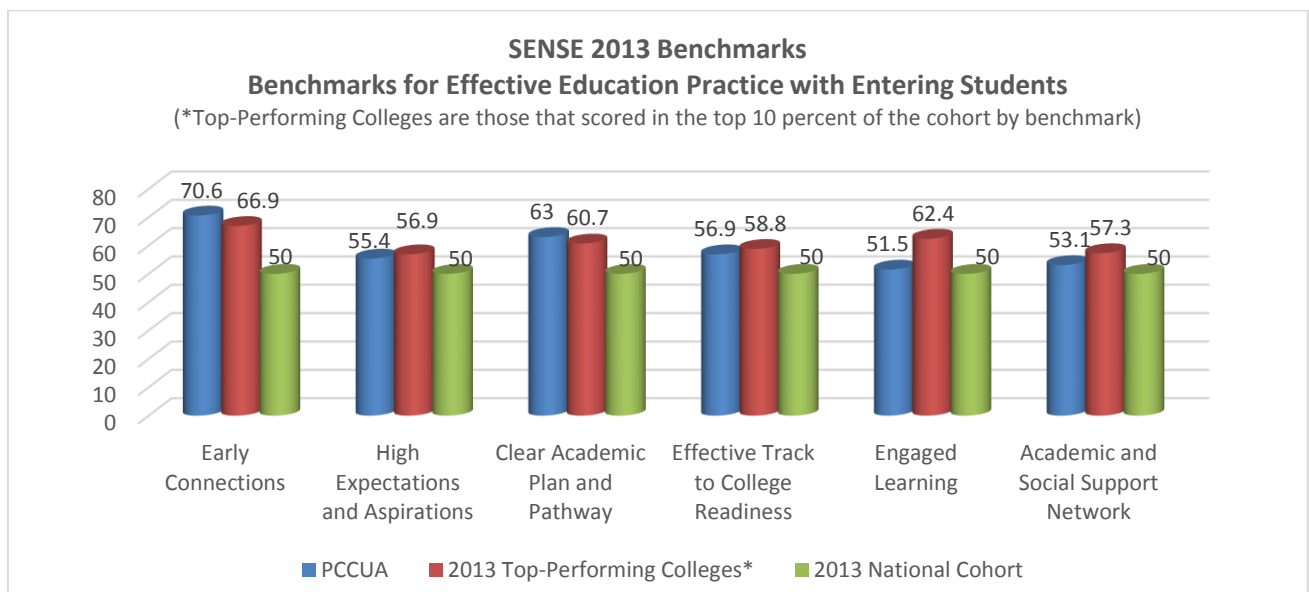
Source: SENSE 2013 PCCUA Key Findings

PCCUA Benchmarks

The following charts reflect Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas SENSE 2013 benchmarks and results. Early Connections is the College's highest area with 70.6% and Engaged Learning is the lowest benchmark at 51.5%. Chart 2 reflects PCCUA scores as compared to the 2013 SENSE Cohort and to Top-Performing Colleges in the cohort by benchmark. Top-Performing Colleges are those that scored in the top 10 percent of the cohort by benchmark. These results provide institutions with a way to look at student engagement of entering students and improve institutional practices that help students succeed in college and leads to completing a degree.



Source: SENSE 2013 –PCCUA Key Findings

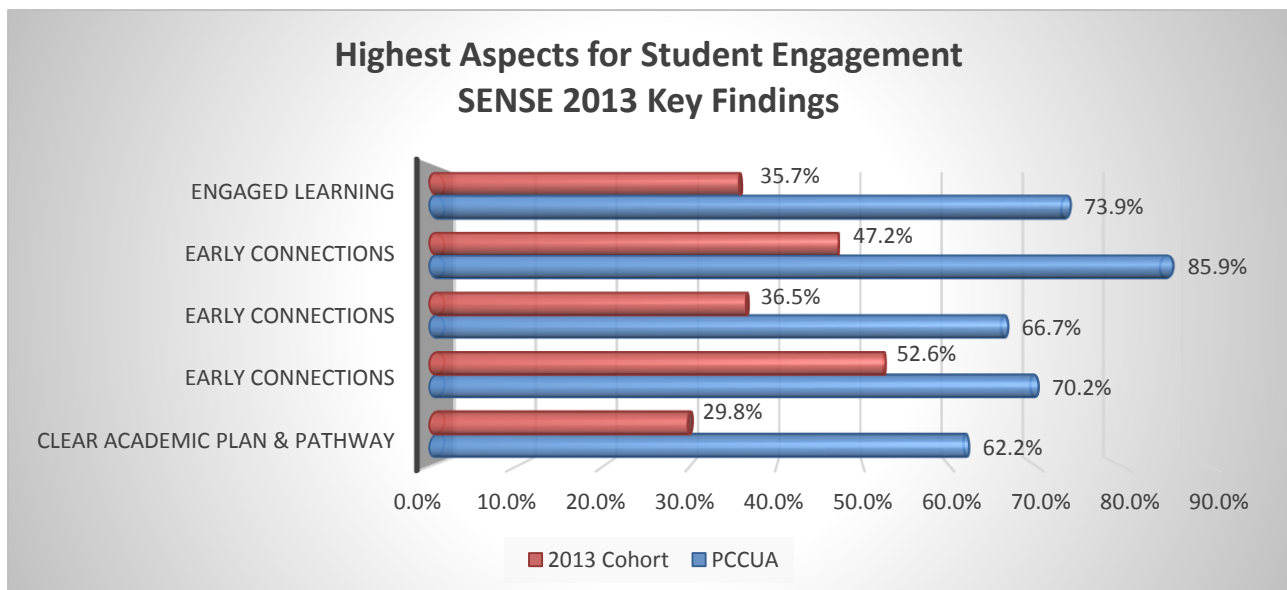


Source: SENSE 2013 Data

Aspects of Highest Student Engagement

Aggregated frequencies for the items which the college performed most favorably relative to the 2013 SENSE Cohort include: Clear Academic Plan and Pathway, Early Connections, and Engaged Learning. For instance, 62.2% of PCCUA students, compared with 29.8% of other students in the cohort, responded strongly agree or agree on Item 18h.

- ❖ 62.2% of student participants responded that *a college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school to help me figure out how many courses to take* (Clear Academic Plan and Pathway-18h).
- ❖ 70.2% of participants responded that *the college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance* (Early Connections-18i).
- ❖ 66.7% of participants responded that *a college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance* (Early Connections-18j).
- ❖ 85.9% of participants responded that *at least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name* (Early Connections-18p).
- ❖ 73.9% of students responded that *they used writing, math, or other skill labs* (Engaged Learning-20f2).



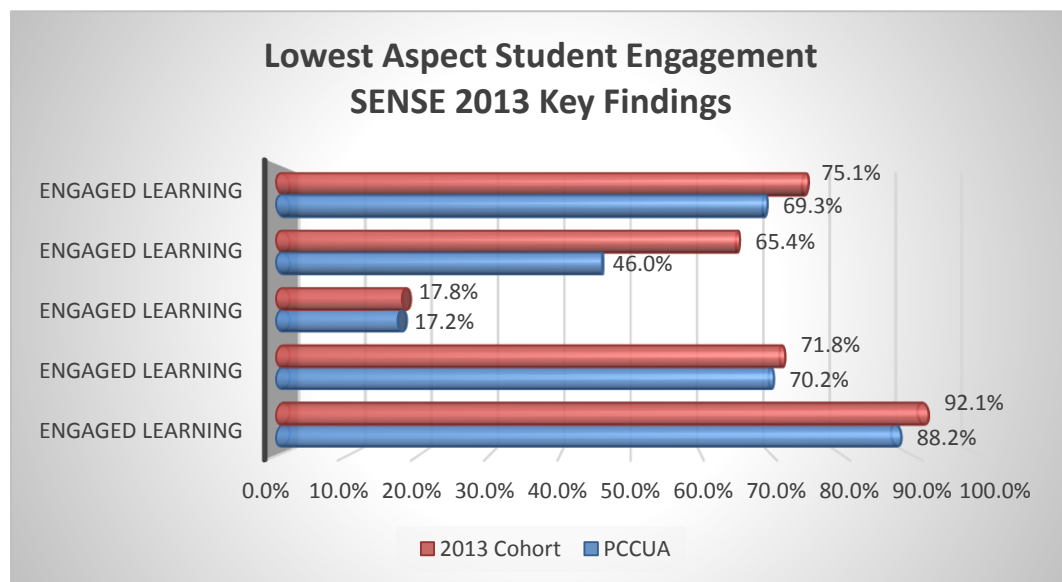
Note: Responses *strongly agree and agree* are combined. Responses *once, two or three times, and four or more times* are combined.

Source: SENSE 2013 PCCUA Key Findings

Aspects of Lowest Student Engagement

Aggregated frequencies for the items which the college performed least favorably relative to the 2013 SENSE Cohort included the Engaged Learning benchmark. For instance, 88.2% of PCCUA students, compared with 92.1% of other students in the cohort responded at least once on Item 19a.

- ❖ 88.2% of students surveyed responded that they *asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions* (Engaged Learning-19a).
- ❖ 70.2% of students responded that they *prepared at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in* (Engaged Learning-19b).
- ❖ 17.2% of students responded that they *participated in a student-initiated study group outside of class* (Engaged Learning-19j).
- ❖ 46% of students responded that they used *an electronic tool to communicate with an instructor about coursework* (Engaged Learning-19i).
- ❖ 69.3% of students responded that they *received prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance* (Engaged Learning-19o).



Note: Responses once, two or three times, and four or more times are combined.

Source: SENSE 2013 PCCUA Key Findings

SENSE Benchmarks and PCCUA Initiative Alignment

SENSE data is used as a resource for data related to student perceptions about the College. SENSE also provides student input used in several college initiatives. The initiatives have included: Achieving the Dream, Guided Pathways, Academy of College Excellence, Working Family Success Network and Faculty Inquiry Group and well as other projects and groups.

The SENSE benchmarks and data used in Guided Pathways includes *Clear Academic Plan and Pathway and Academic and Social Support Network*; Academy of College Excellence (ACE) includes *Early Connections and High Expectations and Aspirations*; and Working Family Success Network Community College (WFSNCC) includes *Early Connections, Clear Academic Plan and Pathway, Effective Track to College Readiness, Engaged Learning, Academic and Social Support Network*.

The College participated in a High Impact Practices Institute (HIPI) sponsored by the Center for Community College Student Engagement in Austin, Texas during the spring 2014 to review data from the SENSE, CCSSE, and CCIS surveys and other institutional data to develop a high impact practice action plan which is incorporated into student success at the College. The high impact practice work plan is listed below.

High Impact Practices Institute - (HIPI) Working Family Success Network Work Plan

- ❖ Create Student Advisory Team or an open advisor, coach, faculty communication and support mechanism
- ❖ Expand Role of Student Success Coaches (continue to include financial coaching but add career coaching)
- ❖ Develop ICP using program of study sheets and needs intake assessment
- ❖ Administer early assessment and intervention in every course (include faculty developed interventions such as tutoring, study groups, teacher study groups, other) documented by plan
- ❖ Align all college options to maximize effectiveness

Early Connections

The following five items comprise this benchmark: *Thinking about your experiences from the time of your decision to attend this college through the end of the first three weeks of your first semester respond to each item three weeks of your first semester, (respond to each item using a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree).*

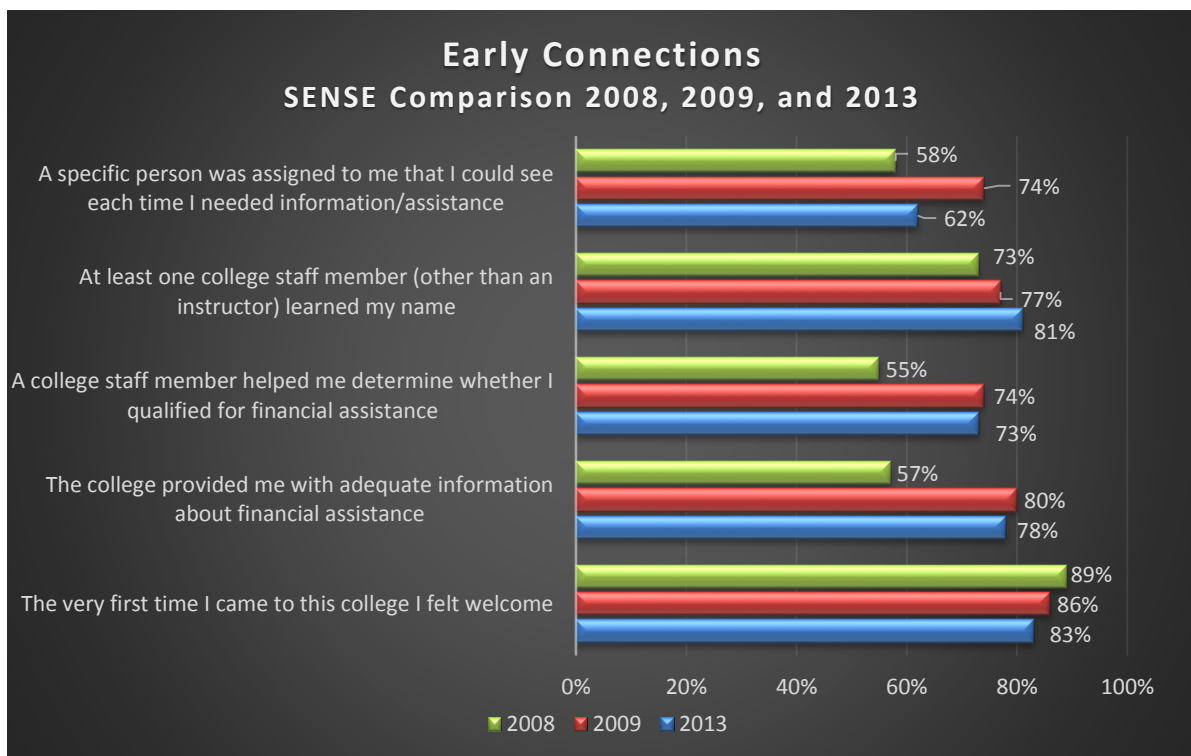
- The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome
- The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)
- A college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance
- At least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name

Thinking about your experiences from the time of your decision to attend this college through the end of the first three weeks of your semester, (respond answering yes or no).

- *A specific person was assigned to me so I could see him/her each time I needed information or assistance*

SENSE 2013 Key Findings

- Eighty-three percent (83%) of students responded that they felt welcome (18a)
 - Seventy-eight percent (78%) of students responded that the college provided them with adequate information about financial assistance (18J)
 - Seventy-three percent (73%) of students responded that a college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance (18i)
 - Eighty-one percent (81%) of students responded at least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name (18P)
- SENSE 2013 Data



Source: SENSE Data 2008, 2009, and 2013

High Expectations and Aspirations

When students perceive clear, high expectations from college staff and faculty, they are more likely to understand what it takes to be successful and adopt behaviors that lead to achievement. The following seven items comprise this benchmark:

Thinking about your experiences from the time of your decision to attend this college through the end of the first three weeks of your first semester, respond to each item (using a five-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree).

- ❖ The instructors at this college want me to succeed (18b)
- ❖ I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college (18t)
- ❖ I am prepared academically to succeed in college (18u)

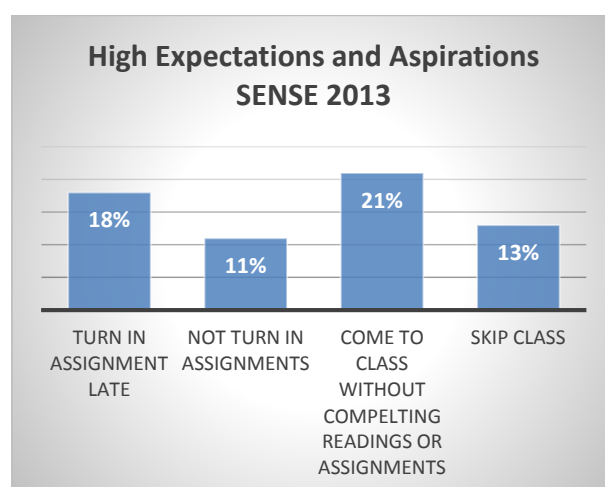
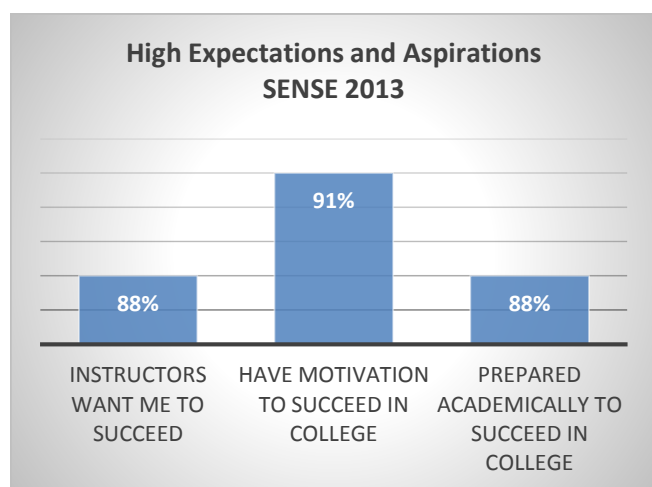
During the first three weeks of your first semester at this college, how often did you:

- ❖ Turn in an assignment late (19c)
- ❖ Not turn in an assignment (19d)
- ❖ Come to class without completing readings or assignments (19f)
- ❖ Skip class (19s)

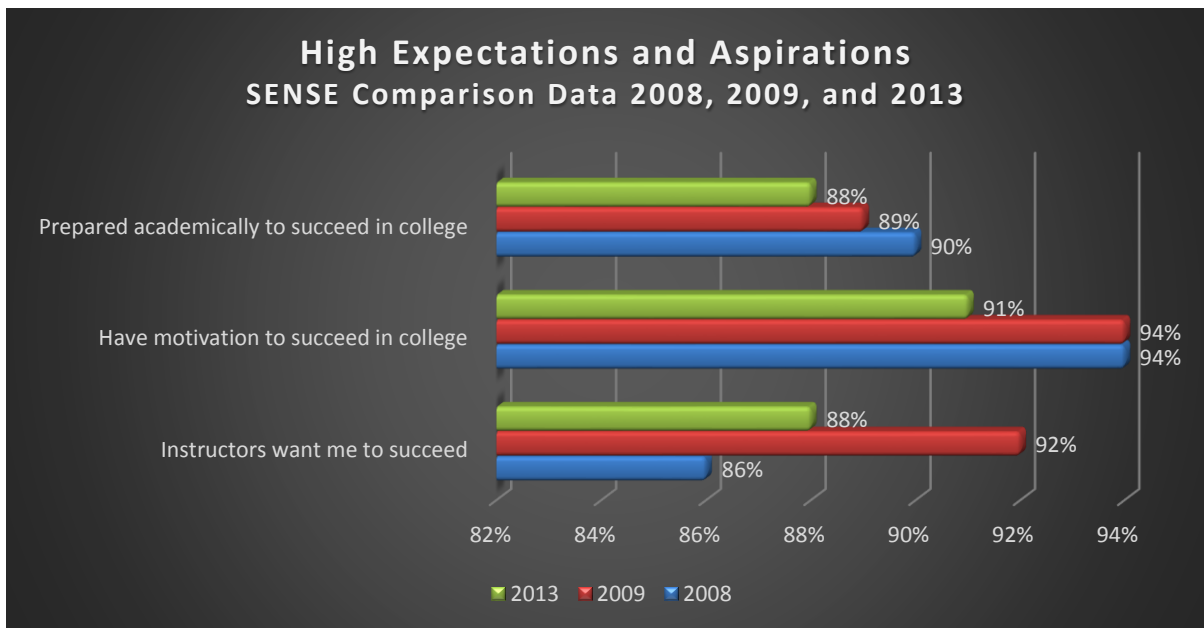
SENSE 2013 Key Findings

- ❖ Ninety one percent (91%) of PCCUA students *agree or strongly agree* that they have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college.
- ❖ Eighty-eight percent (88%) of PCCUA students surveyed believe that they are prepared academically to succeed in college.
- ❖ More than three quarters (88%) of PCCUA students feel that instructors at this school wants them to succeed.
- ❖ Eleven percent (11%) report that they did not turn in an assignment at least once, while almost one-quarter of respondents (18%) say they turned in an assignment late at least once.
- ❖ Twenty-one percent (21%) report coming to class without completing readings or assignments at least once.
- ❖ Nineteen percent (19%) report skipping class one or more times.

SENSE 2013 Data

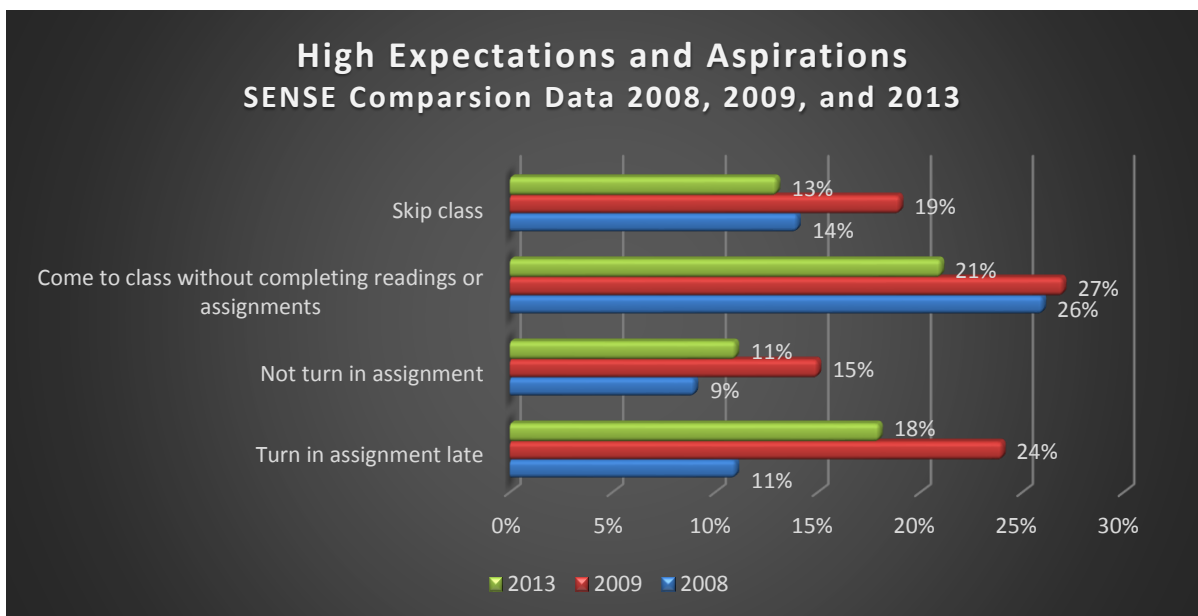


SENSE Data 2013



Responding strongly agree or agree

SENSE Data 2008, 2009, and 2013



Responding strongly agree or agree

SENSE Data 2008, 2009, and 2013

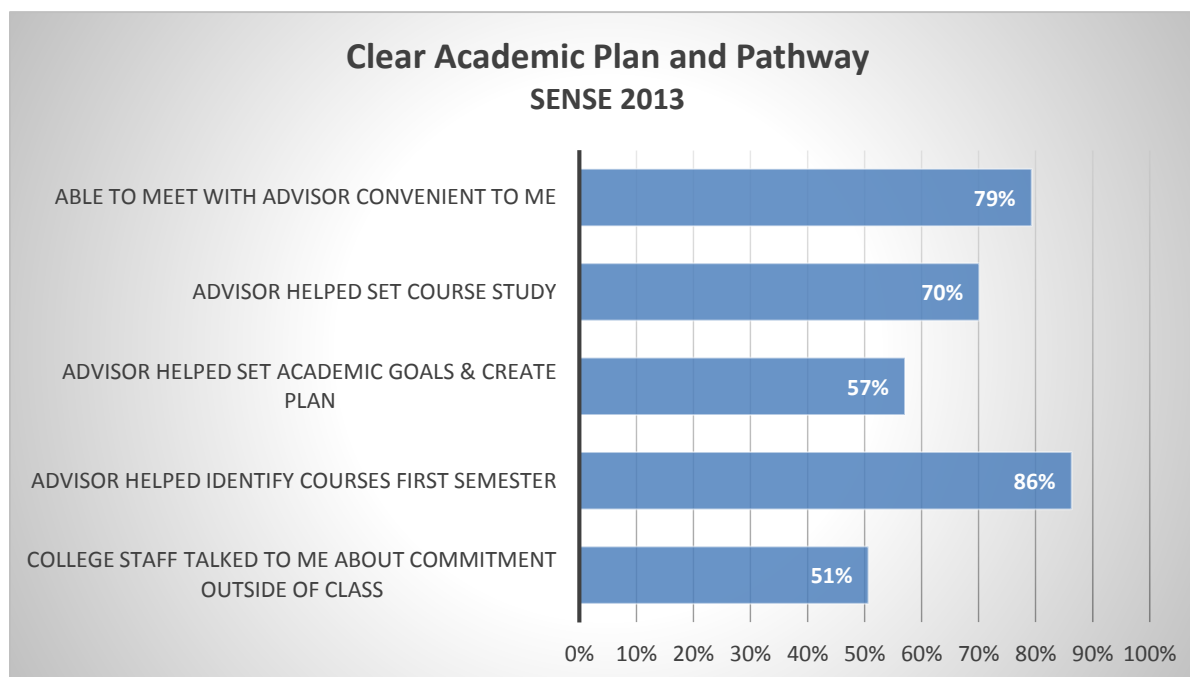
Clear Academic Plan and Pathway

Students are more likely to persist if they are advised on which courses to take in addition to assistance with creating a plan, and setting goals to achieve the plan.

The following five items comprise this benchmark:

Thinking about your experiences from the time of your decision to attend this college through the end of the first three weeks of your first semester, respond to each item (using a five-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree)

- ❖ I was able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me.
- ❖ An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester.
- ❖ An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major.
- ❖ An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them.
- ❖ A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school (work, children, dependents, etc.) to help me figure out how many courses to take.



Responded strongly agree or agree

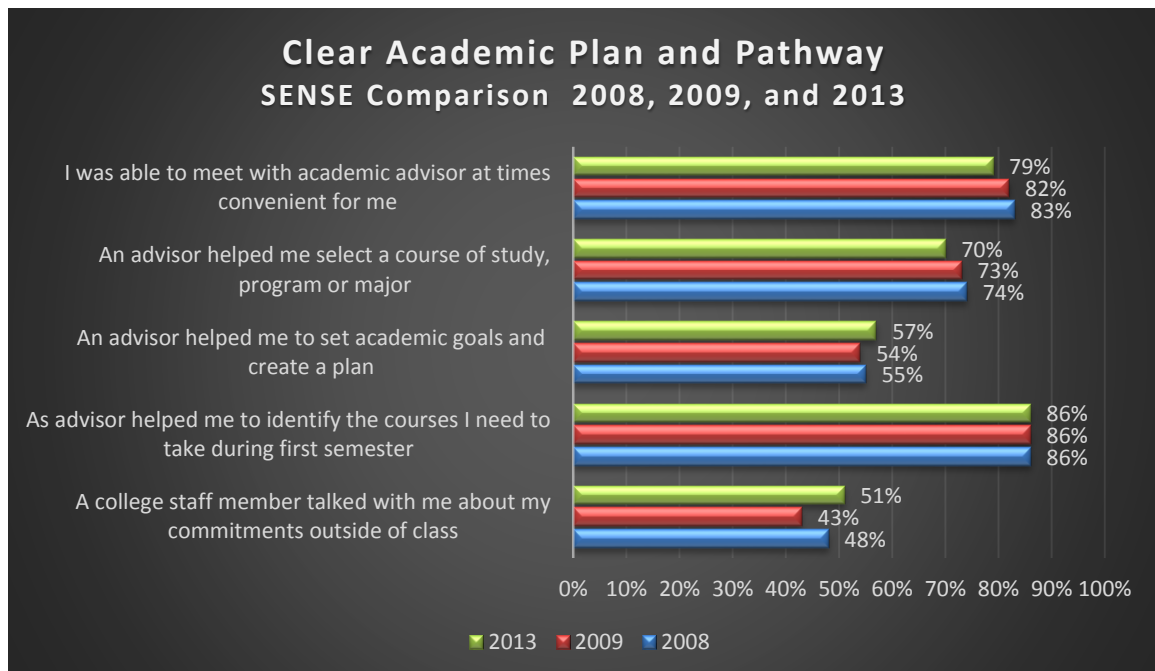
Source: SENSE 2013 Data

SENSE 2013 Key Findings

Sixty-Two percent (62%) of the entering PCCUA student respondents indicated that they had a specific person assigned to them and agreed that they had assistance with selecting courses and creating a schedule but a smaller percentage say they had help with setting academic goals and developing plans.

- ❖ 49.7% of respondents reported that their main source of academic advising was family, friends or other students.
- ❖ 79.3% of entering PCCUA student respondents *agree or strongly agree* that they were able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for them.
- ❖ 70.1% *agree or strongly agree* that an advisor help them to identify the courses need to take during their first semester.
- ❖ 57% *agree or strongly agree* that an advisor helped them set academic goals and create a plan for achieving them.
- ❖ (51 %) *agree or strongly agree* that a college staff member talked with them about their commitments outside of school to help them figure out how many courses to take.

Source: SENSE 2013 Data



Responded strongly agree or agree

Source: SENSE Data 2008, 2009, and 2013

Effective Track to College Readiness

Thinking about your experiences from the time of our decision to attend this college through the end of the first three weeks of your first semester, respond answering yes or no:

- ❖ Before I could register for classes I was required to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET, SAT, ACT, etc.).
- ❖ I took a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET, SAT, ACT, etc.).
- ❖ This college required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester.

Thinking about your experiences from the time of your decision to attend this college through the end of the first three weeks in your first semester, respond to each item:

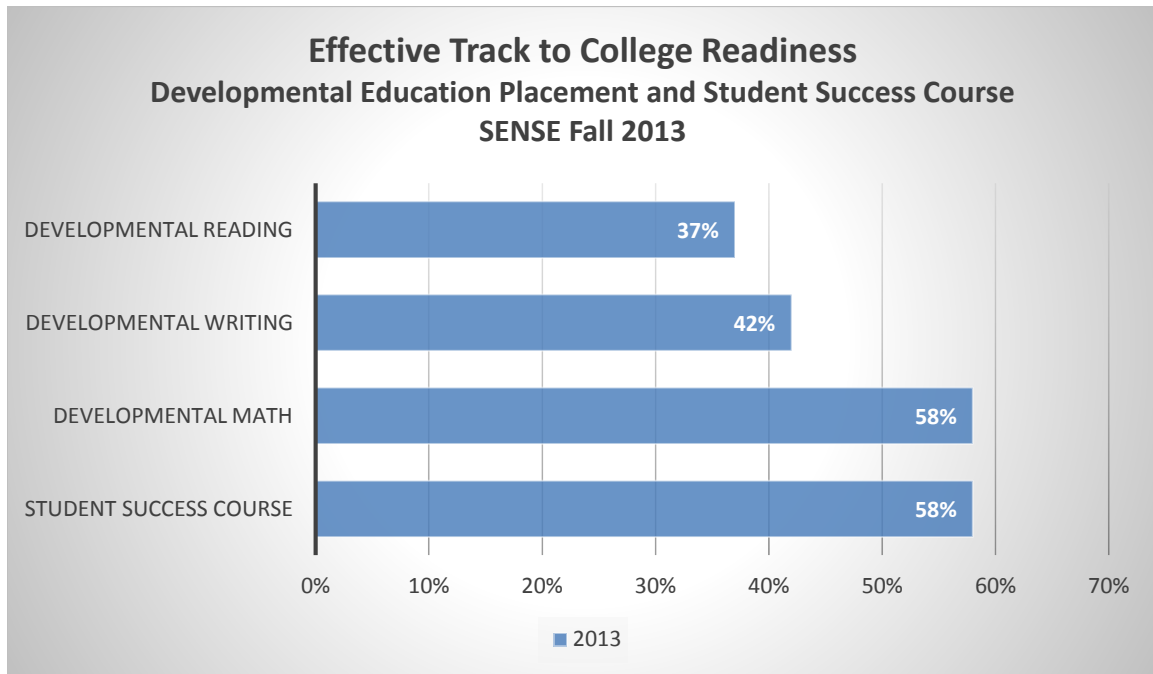
- ❖ Within a class or through another experiences at this college, I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note-taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.).
- ❖ Within a class or through another experiences at this college, I learned to understand my academic strengths and weaknesses.
- ❖ Within a class or through another experiences at this college, I learned skills and strategies to improve my test-taking ability.

SENSE 2013 Key Findings

In the SENSE survey, eighty-nine percent (89%) of PCCUA students reported taking placement tests. Seventy-six percent (76%) of entering students responded that they placed into a developmental course. Additionally, there is growing evidence that participating in student success courses leads to improved student outcomes, especially for developmental students.

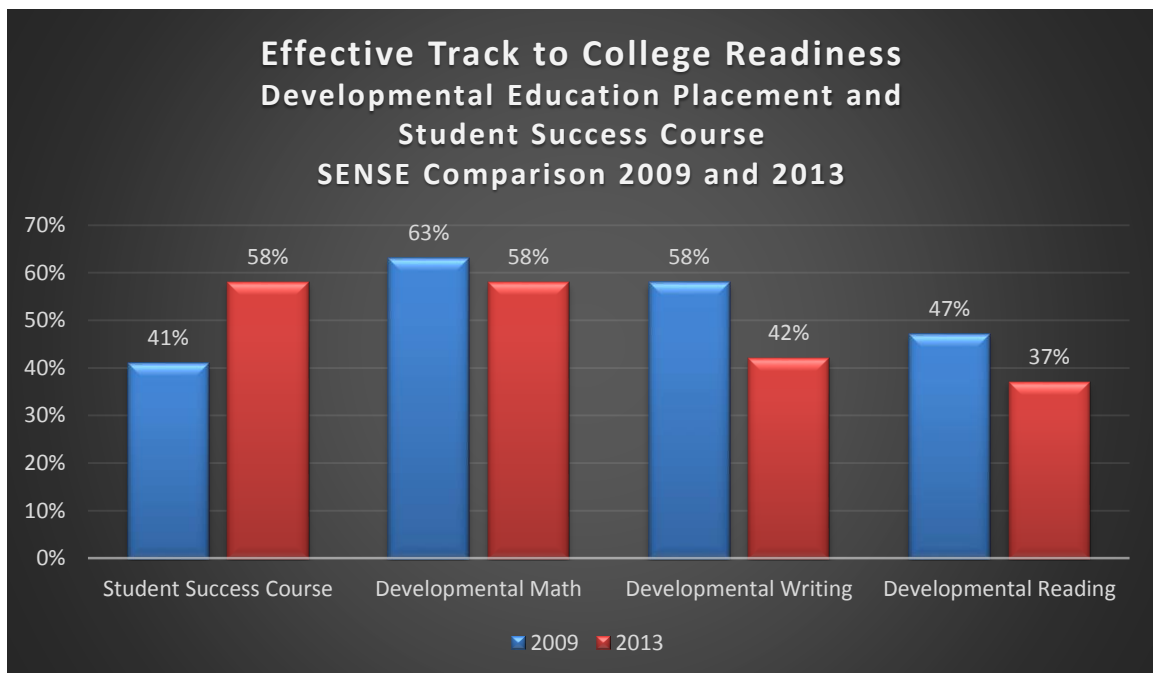
- ❖ 37% of entering students enrolled in developmental reading (17a)
- ❖ 42% enrolled in developmental writing (17b)
- ❖ 58% enrolled in developmental math (17c)
- ❖ 58% enrolled in a student success course (17e)
- ❖ 82% learned to improve study skills (21a)
- ❖ 74% learned to understand academic strengths and weaknesses (21b)
- ❖ 64% learn skills and strategies to improve test-taking ability (21c)

Source: SENSE 2013 Data



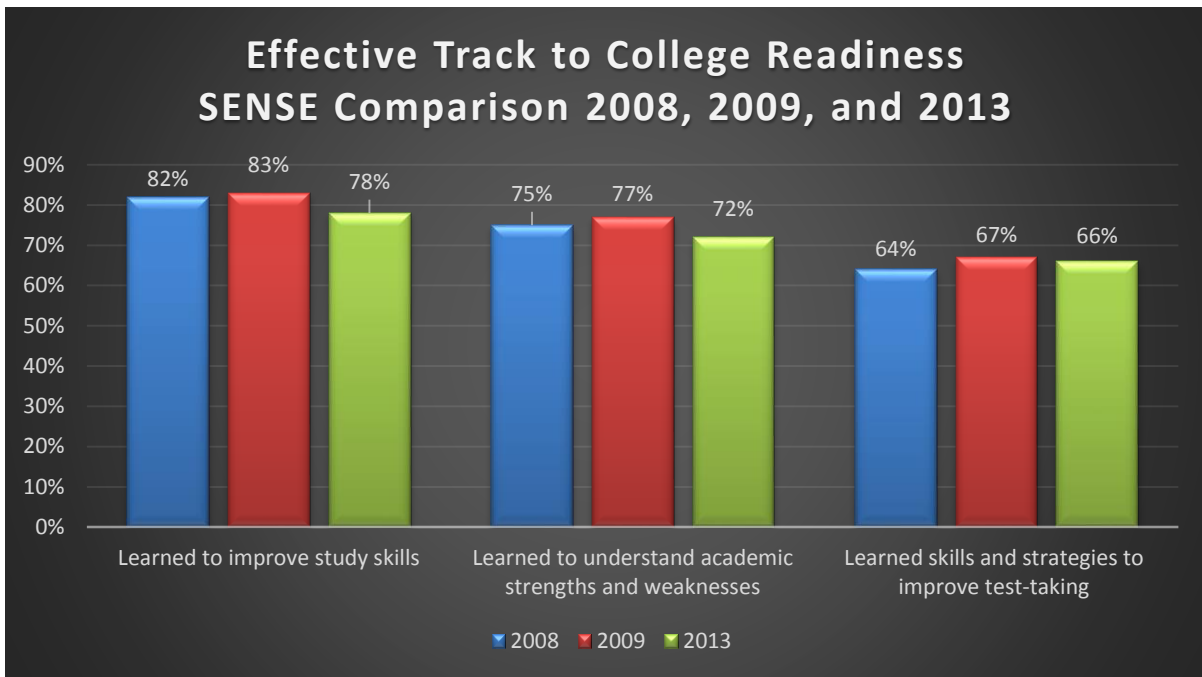
Responded yes or no

Source: SENSE 2013 Data



Responded yes or no

Source: SENSE 2009 and 2013 Data (2008 data not available)



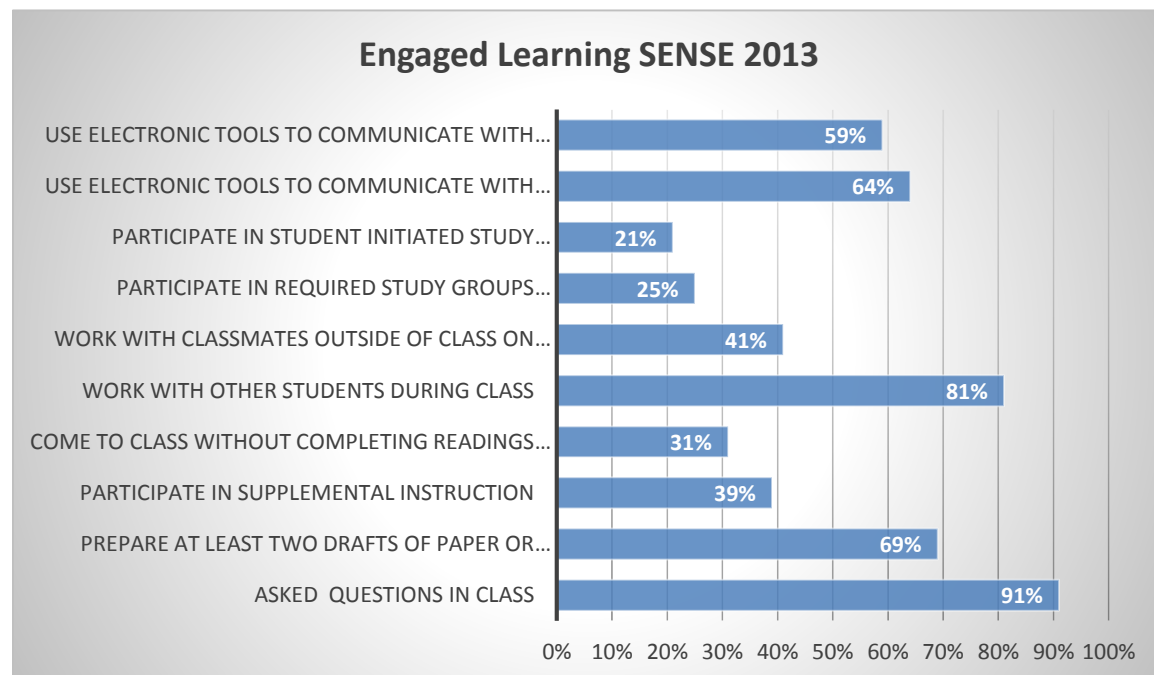
Responded strongly agree or agree

Source: SENSE 2008, 2009, and 2013 Data

Engaged Learning

Instructional approaches that foster engaged learning are critical for student success. Students must find ways to balance their studies with work and family responsibilities, the most effective learning experiences will be those the college intentionally designs. The following 16 items comprise this benchmark:

- ❖ Asked questions in class (19a)
- ❖ Prepare two drafts or assignment (19b)
- ❖ Participate in supplemental instruction (19e)
- ❖ Work with other students during class (19g)
- ❖ Work with other students outside class (19h)
- ❖ Discuss ideas from readings with instructor (19q)
- ❖ Use face to face tutoring (20.2d)
- ❖ Used writing, math, other skill labs (20.2f)
- ❖ Used computer lab (20.2h)
- ❖ Participate In student initiated study groups not required (19j)
- ❖ Used electronic tool to communicate with another student ((19k)
- ❖ Discuss assign or grade with instructor(19m)
- ❖ Ask for help from instructor (19n)
- ❖ Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructor (19o)
- ❖ Participate in required study groups outside class (19i)
- ❖ Use electronic tool to communicate with instructor (19l)



Responded one or more times

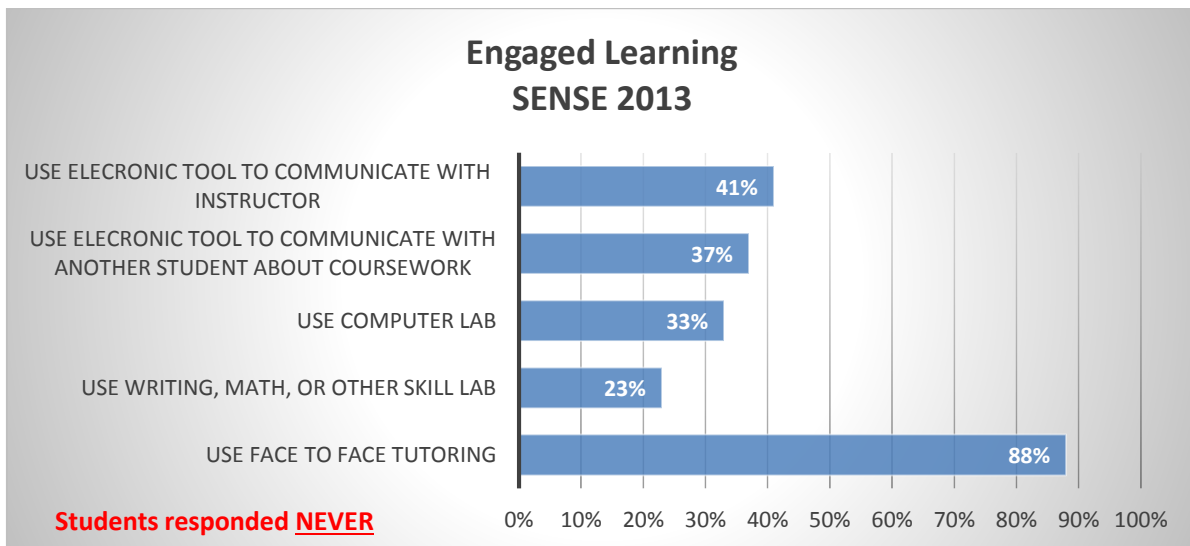
Source: SENSE 2013 Data

SENSE 2013 Key Findings

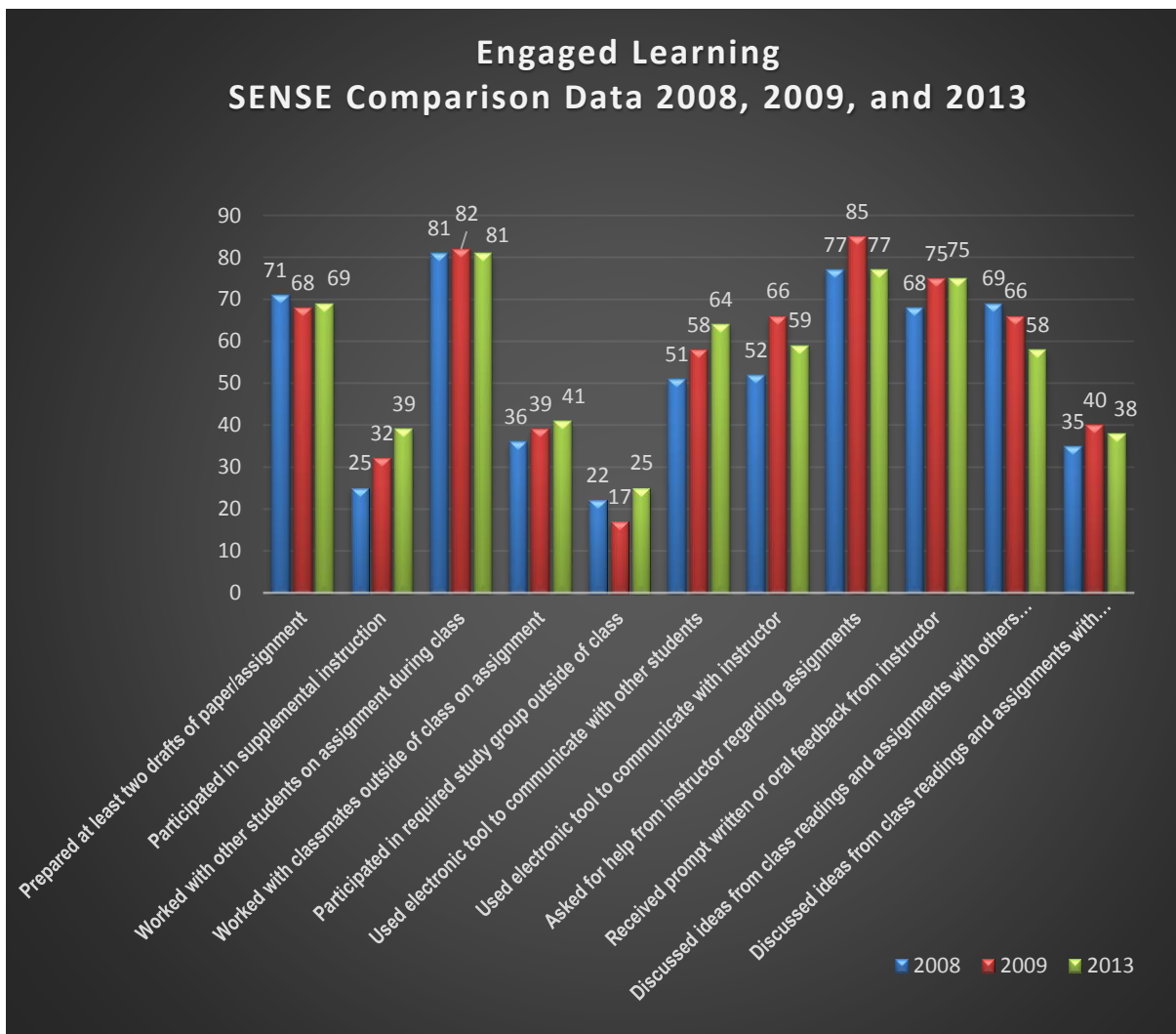
In addition to reviewing student responses related to what they strongly agree or agree with, it is interesting to compare responses of what students state they **NEVER** do related to engaged learning. In the first three weeks of college, PCCUA entering students responded:

- ❖ 37% say they **are not** enrolled in a student success course.
- ❖ 9% report that they **never** asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.
- ❖ 31% say they **never** prepared at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.
- ❖ 61% report that they **never** participated in supplemental instruction.
- ❖ 19% say they **never** worked with other students on a project or assignment during class.
- ❖ 59% say they **never** worked with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments.
- ❖ 75% say they **never** participated in a required study group outside of class.
- ❖ 79% report that they **never** participated in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class.
- ❖ 41% say they **never** used an electronic tool to communicate with an instructor about coursework.
- ❖ 28% say they **never** discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor.
- ❖ 23% say they **never** asked for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class.
- ❖ 26% say they **never** received prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on their performance.
- ❖ 62% report that they **never** discussed ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class.
- ❖ 88% report that they **never** used face to face tutoring.
- ❖ 23% say they **never** used writing, math, or other skill labs.
- ❖ 33% say they **never** used a computer lab.
- ❖ 37% say they **never** used an electronic tool to communicate with another student about coursework

Source: SENSE 2013 Data



Source: SENSE 2013 Data



Students responded one or more times

Source: SENSE Data 2008, 2009, and 2013

Academic and Social Support Network

Students benefit from having a personal network that enables them to obtain information about college services, along with the academic and social support critical to student success. Because entering students often don't know what they don't know, colleges must purposefully create those networks.

The following items comprise this benchmark:

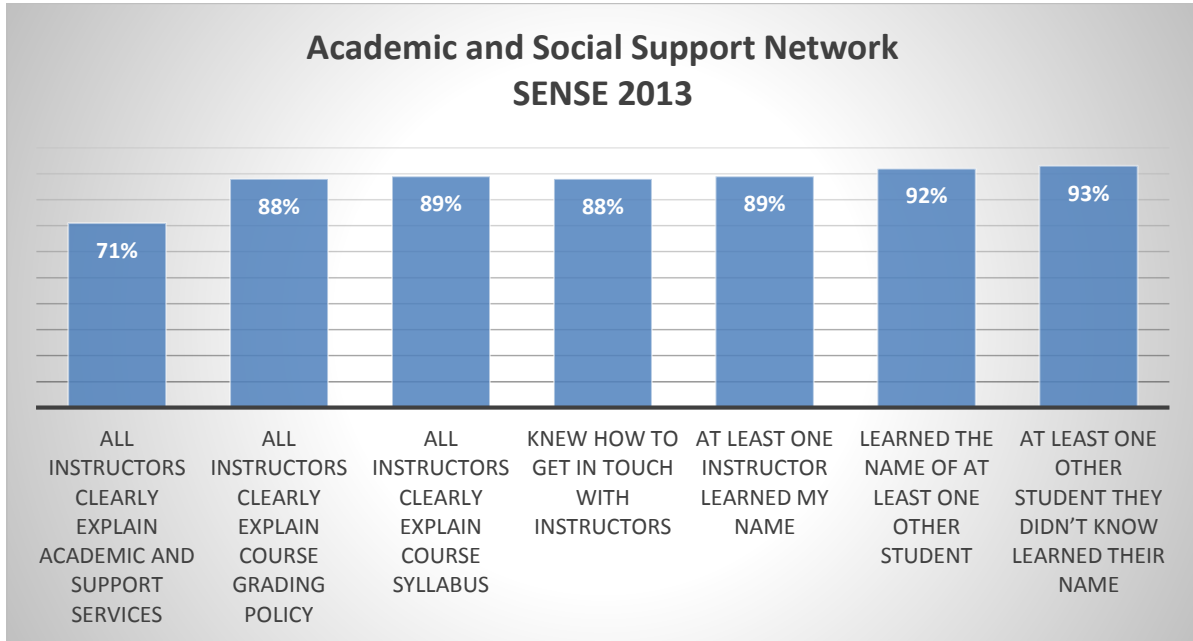
- ❖ All instructors clearly explain academic & support services (18l)
- ❖ All instructors clearly explain course grading policy(18m)
- ❖ All instructors clearly explain course syllabus (18n)
- ❖ Knew how to get in touch with instructors (18o)
- ❖ At least one other student whom didn't know previously learned my name (18q)
- ❖ At least one instructor learned my name (18r)
- ❖ Learned the name of at least one other student in most of my classes (18s)

SENSE 2013 Key Findings

PCCUA students responded positively to the questions that asked about building support networks.

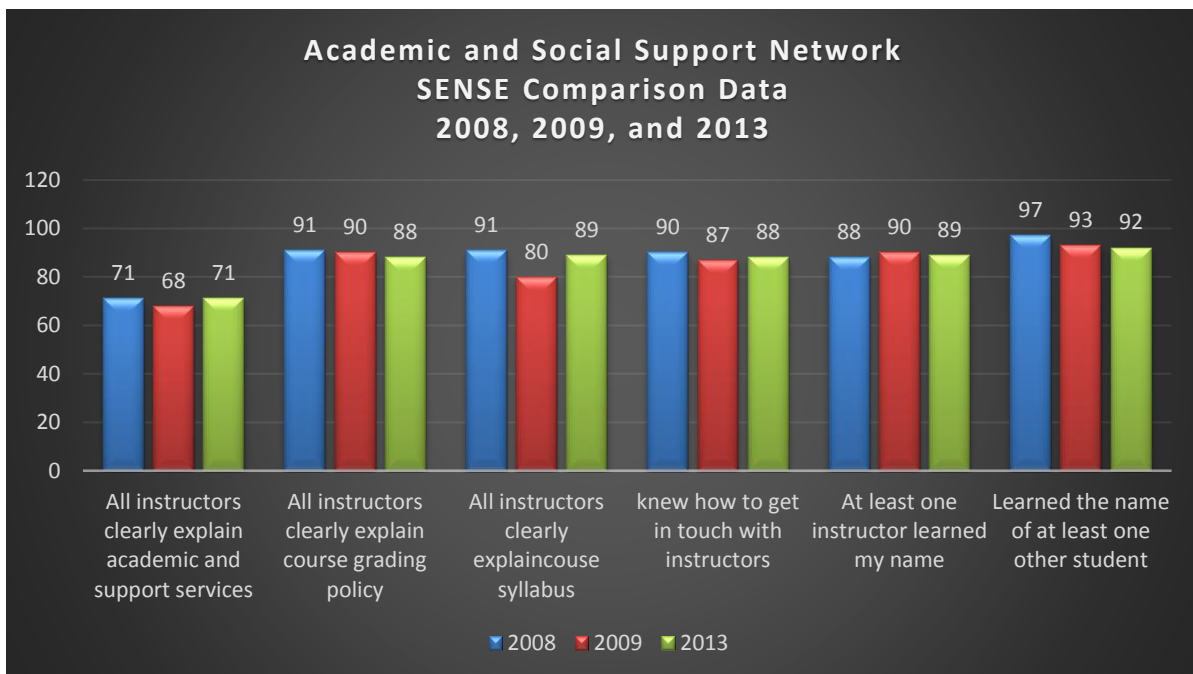
- ❖ 71% of respondents *agree or strongly agree* that all instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at their college.
- ❖ 88% *agree or strongly agree* that all instructors clearly explained course grading policies.
- ❖ 89% *agree or strongly agree* that all instructors clearly explained course syllabi.
- ❖ 88% *agree or strongly agree* that they knew how to get in touch with their instructors outside of class.
- ❖ 89% *agree or strongly agree* that at least one other student whom they didn't previously known learned their name.
- ❖ 92% *agree or strongly agree* that at least one instructor learned their name.
- ❖ 93% *agree or strongly agree* that they learned the name of at least one other student in most of their classes.

Source: SENSE 2013 Data



Responded strongly agree or agree

Source: SENSE 2013 Data

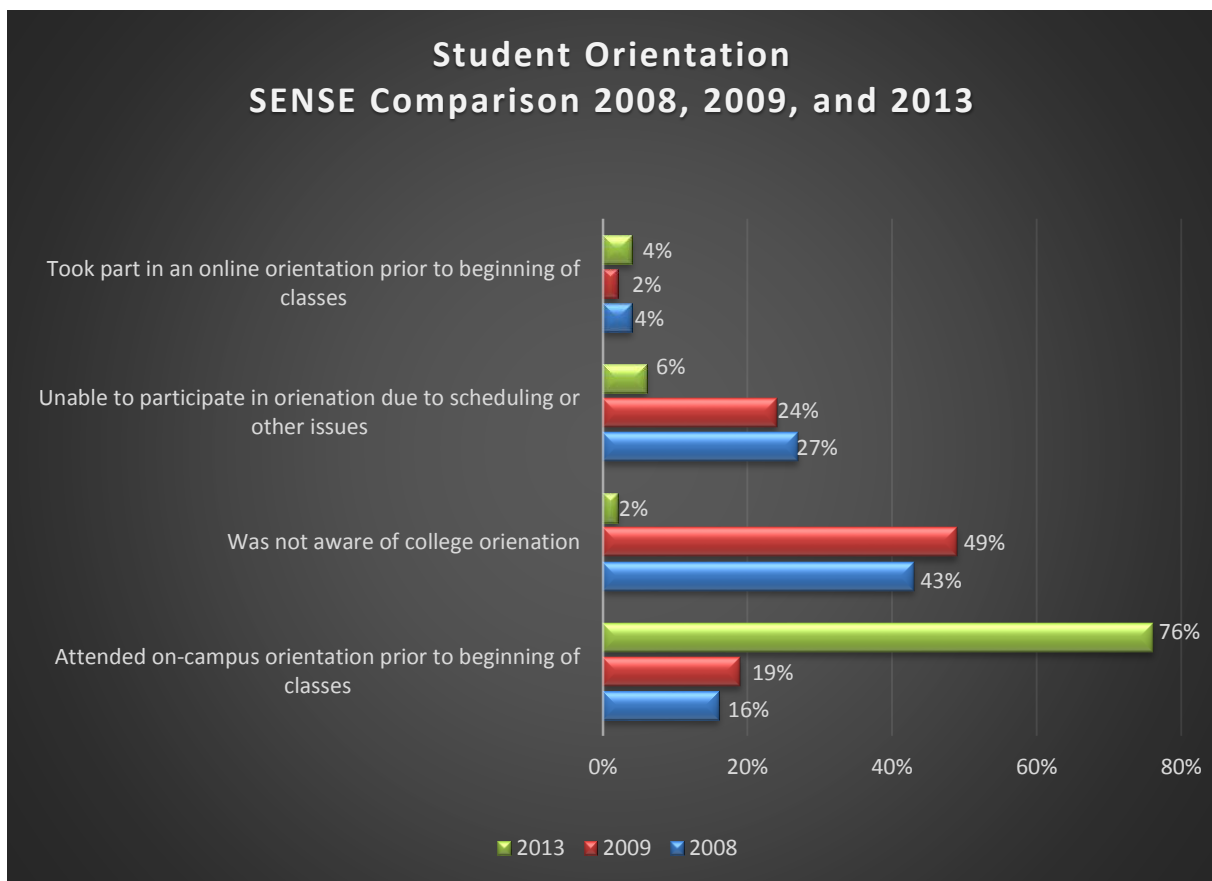


Responded strongly agree or agree

Source: SENSE 2008, 2009, and 2013 Data

Student Orientation

Student orientation was identified as a priority in the 2009-2010 academic year. The College participated in an Entering Student Success Institute (ESSI) conducted by the Center for Community College Student Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin, Texas in 2009 to review SENSE 2008 data and to identify the top three priorities of focus based on data. Student orientation increases student awareness of college purpose, processes, and procedures and also improves student readiness for classes, motivation to become engaged and encouragement to seek assistance and prepares them for the academic year. The College implemented mandatory student orientation in the fall of 2012 and held each fall at all three campuses. The dates for student orientation is reflected in the College's Academic Calendar, the fall semester Schedule of Classes as well as the College Catalog. All new and returning students are required to attend student orientation.



Response or no response

Source: SENSE 2008, 2009, and 2013 Data

Academic Advising and Planning Module- SENSE 2013

Intrusive advising was identified as another priority based on data from the SENSE survey. The data indicated that some students did not realize that they had an advisor assigned to them. During the ESSI Institute, a college team developed an action plan to reinforce academic advising at the College. The action plan included: 1) providing students with direction to assist with identification of academic/vocational goals; 2) creating an academic plan; 3) assisting student with identification of course needed to meet goals; 4) providing intrusive, close advisor contact ensuring that student can identify and are using advising services; and 5) requiring students to meet with advisor at least three times during the semester. The College continues to fine tune the advising process to meet the needs of students and help them successfully develop an academic plan for completion and success.

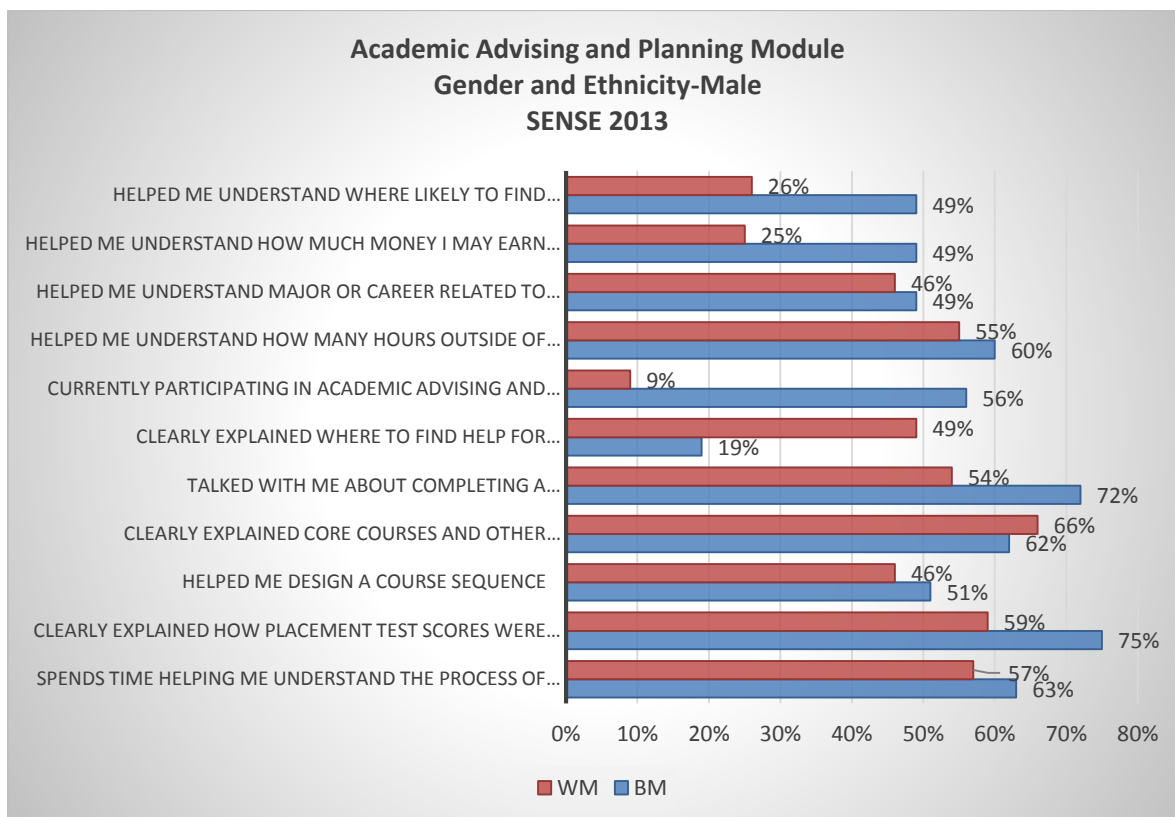
Additionally, the SENSE 2013 Survey also included an Academic Advising and Planning Module that specifically targeted questions related to advising and planning. This module is helpful in providing student perceptions about the intrusive advising strategy developed during the ESSI Institute. This data has also been disaggregated by gender and ethnicity.

The following twelve questions were included in the advising and planning module for entering students:

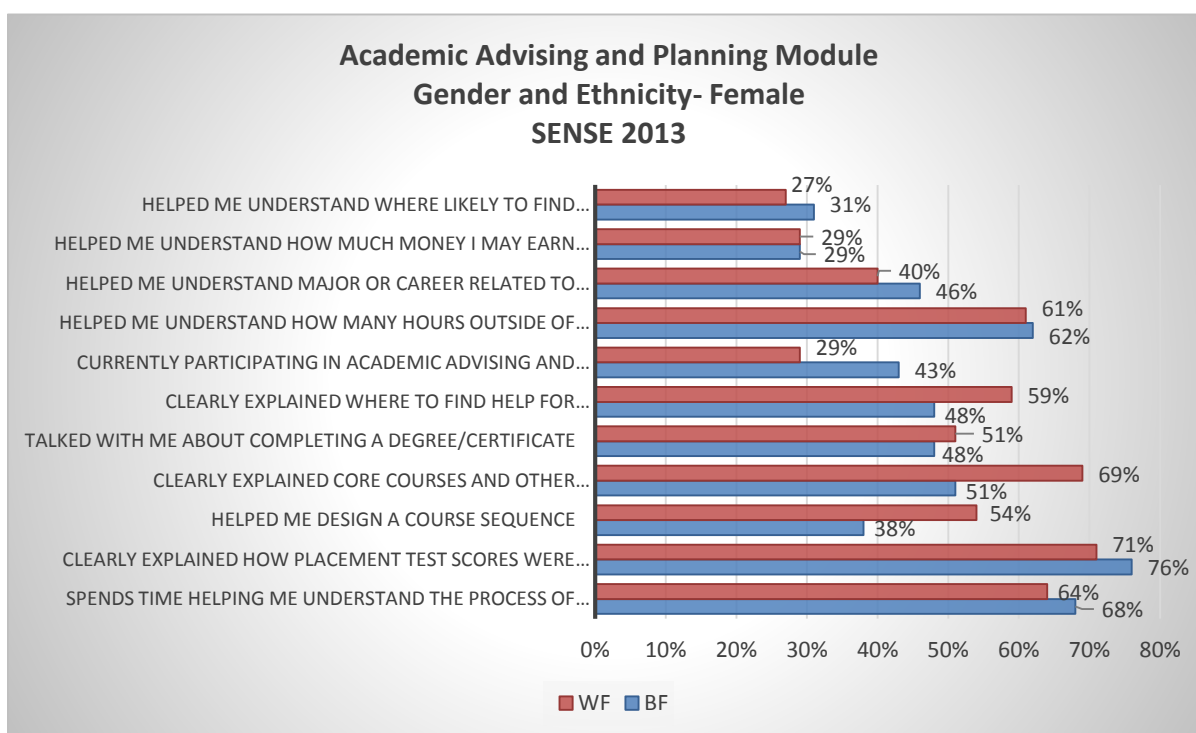
A college staff member...

- ❖ 70% Spends time helping me understand the process of enrolling in and attending college.
- ❖ 71% clearly explained how placement test scores were used to determine if I was ready for college-level courses or needed to take courses to become college ready.
- ❖ 49% helped me design a course sequence.
- ❖ 58% clearly explained core courses and other requirements for completion.
- ❖ 56% talked with me about completing a degree/certificate.
- ❖ 44% clearly explained where to find help for dropping/withdrawing from college.
- ❖ 64% clearly explained consequences of receiving poor grades.
- ❖ 33% currently participating in academic advising and planning as part of courses.
- ❖ 62% helped me understand how many hours outside of class to study and prepare for classes.
- ❖ 45% helped me understand major or career related to high demand occupation.
- ❖ 35% helped me understand how much money I may earn in job related to career/major.
- ❖ 32% helped me understand where likely to find employment in career/major.

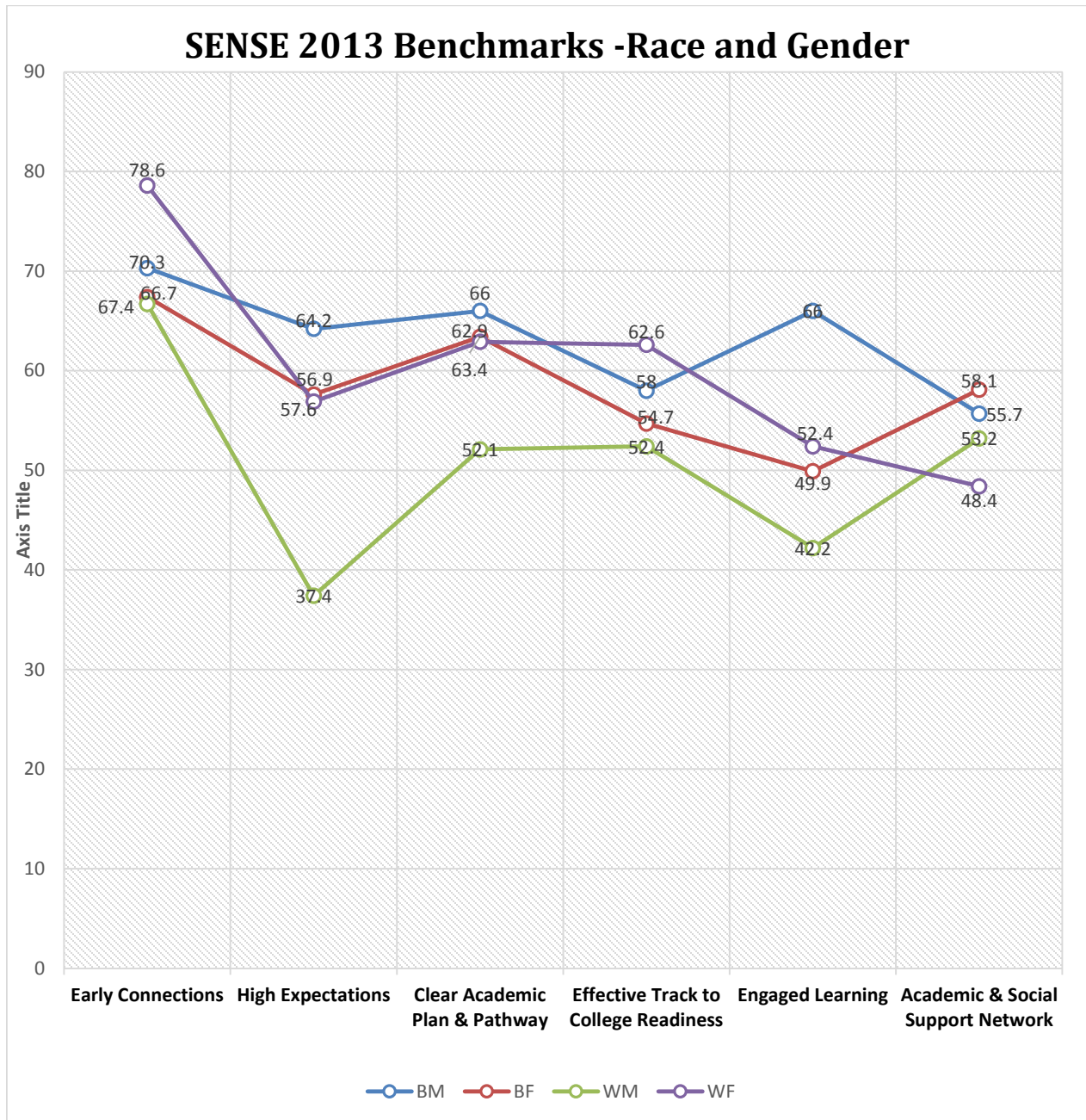
Source: SENSE 2013 Data



Source: SENSE 2013 Data-Academic Advising and Planning Module



Source: SENSE 2013 Data-Academic Advising and Planning Module



Source: SENSE 2013 Data

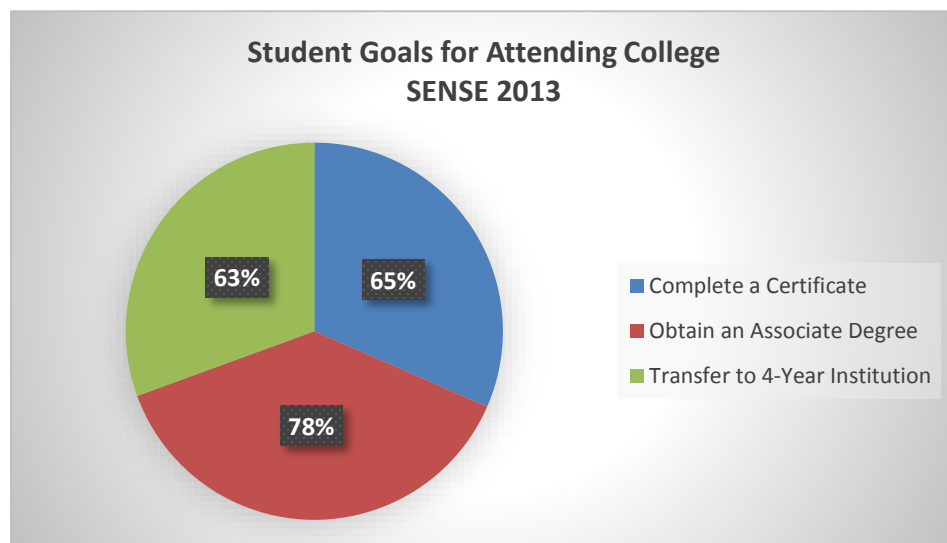
Overview of PCCUA Participants and General Data- SENSE 2013

The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) was administered during the fall 2013 semester to 209 entering students. The survey was conducted in randomly selected class populations of all first college-level English and math courses and all developmental education courses.

SENSE 2013 Survey Respondents	
Characteristics	Entering Students
Male	33%
Female	64%
Enrolled less than full-time	20%
Enrolled full-time	80%
Traditional age (18-24)	83%
Non-traditional age (25-older)	15%
Work more than 20 hours per week	31%
Married	10%
Have children living with them	32%
Source: SENSE 2013 Data	

Student Goals for Attending College

Students indicated in the SENSE 2013 survey that their goal for attending college included completing a certificate, associate's degree or planned to transfer to a four-year institution.



Responded yes or no

Source: SENSE 2013 Data

SENSE 2013 College Services Available

Students were asked to provide feedback regarding their knowledge of services at PCCUA and identify which services they had used and if they were satisfied with the service that was provided. The table below indicates how the students responded during the fall 2013 administration of the SENSE survey.

SENSE 2013 College Services Available			
<i>Service</i>	<i>Did You Know About? (responded yes)</i>	<i>Did You Use? (one to four times)</i>	<i>Were You Satisfied? (very or somewhat)</i>
Academic Advising	76%	59%	63%
Career Counseling	51%	20%	25%
Tutoring	72%	13%	21%
Writing, Math, Other Skills Labs	90%	77%	74%
Financial Aid Assistance	86%	70%	67%
Computer Labs	92%	67%	68%
Transfer Credit Assistance	56%	13%	23%
Services to Student with Disabilities	57%	9%	17%
Student Organizations	63%	17%	28%

Note: Entering Students First Three Weeks of Semester responded to college services at PCCUA. SENSE survey administered during the fall semester.

Source: SENSE 2013 Data

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<http://www.pccua.edu/faculty-staff/student-engagement/>

For more information about SENSE: <http://www.enteringstudent.org>

Sources:

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Achieving the Dream is a national initiative to help more community college students succeed. The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that traditionally have faced significant barriers to success, including students of color and low-income students.