



The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*)

Executive Summary of 2012 Survey Results

Black Hawk College

Introduction

The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*), a product and service of the Center for Community College Student Engagement, helps community colleges discover why some entering students persist and succeed and others do not.

Administered during the 4th and 5th weeks of the fall academic term, *SENSE* asks students to reflect on their earliest experiences (academic and services-related) with the college.

SENSE Sampling

In *SENSE* sampling procedures, students are sampled at the classroom level. The survey was administered in classes randomly selected from those courses most likely to enroll entering students, will a random sample pulled from all first college-level English and math courses and all developmental reading, writing, and math courses, excluding ESL courses.

Of those entering students sampled at our institution, 381 respondents submitted usable surveys. The number of completed surveys produced an overall **“percent of target” rate** of 47.6%. The percent of target rate is the ratio of the adjusted number of completed surveys (surveys that were filled out properly and did not fall into any of the exclusionary categories) to the target sample size.

Benchmarks for “Percent of Target”:

- All Colleges in 2012 *SENSE* Cohort: 50.0%
 - All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 52.6%
-

2012 Student Respondent Profile

Enrollment Status

- 80% of BHC’s entering student respondents reported being full-time college students.
- 73% of the 2012 *SENSE* Cohort colleges’ entering students reported being full-time students.

Age

- 88% of BHC entering student respondents reported being between 18 and 24 years old.
- 60% of the 2012 *SENSE* Cohort colleges' entering students reported being between 18 and 24.

Gender

- 60% of BHC entering student respondents reported being female.
- 54% of the 2012 *SENSE* Cohort colleges' entering students reported being female.

Racial Identification (What is your racial identification?)

- 70% of our entering student respondents identified themselves as White/non-Hispanic.
- 51% of the 2012 *SENSE* Cohort colleges' entering students identified themselves as White/non-Hispanic.

Limited English Speaking Students

At our college, 8.1% of *SENSE* respondents are non-native English speakers.

Benchmarks for Limited English Speaking Students:

- All Colleges in 2012 *SENSE* Cohort: 14.6%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 13.4%

First-Generation Status

16.8% of entering student respondents indicate that neither parent has earned a degree higher than a high school diploma nor has college experience; accordingly, these students are considered "first-generation."

Benchmarks for First-Generation Status:

- All Colleges in 2012 *SENSE* Cohort: 20.5%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 20.7%

Orientation

25.5% of entering student respondents report attending an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes, while 1.9% report attending an online orientation. 1.3% of entering student respondents report enrolling in an orientation course during their first semester/quarter at the college.

Benchmarks for Attending On-campus Orientation:

- All Colleges in 2012 *SENSE* Cohort: 48.5%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 47.2%

Benchmarks for Attending Online Orientation:

- All Colleges in 2012 *SENSE* Cohort: 11.5%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 8.1%

Benchmarks for Enrolling in Orientation Course:

- All Colleges in 2012 *SENSE* Cohort: 7.4%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 7.0%

Courses Dropped

4.7% of entering student respondents report dropping at least one course after the first day of class.

Benchmarks for Courses Dropped:

- All Colleges in 2012 *SENSE* Cohort: 9.2%

- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 8.8%

External Commitments

38.7% of entering student respondents work 21 or more hours per week; and 54.7% spend at least 11 hours per week working for pay.

Benchmarks for working 21 or more hours per week:

- All Colleges in 2012 SENSE Cohort: 34.6%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 34.7%

Benchmarks for working 11 or more hours per week:

- All Colleges in 2012 SENSE Cohort: 46.3%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 46.1%

Goals

Entering student respondents were asked to indicate their reasons or goals for attending this college. 69.0% indicated that completing certificate is a goal. 81.2% indicated completing an Associate's degree is a goal. 83.2% of entering students indicated that transferring to a 4-year college is a goal.

Benchmarks for completing a Certificate:

- All Colleges in 2012 SENSE Cohort: 57.8%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 57.2%

Benchmarks for completing an Associate's Degree:

- All Colleges in 2012 SENSE Cohort: 79.3%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 79.0%

Benchmarks for transferring to a 4-year college:

- All Colleges in 2012 SENSE Cohort: 74.4%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 73.3%

***SENSE* Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice**

To assist colleges in their efforts to reach for excellence, the Center reports national benchmarks of effective practice with entering students in community colleges. Research shows that the more actively engaged students are—with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter—the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals.

SENSE benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement early in the college experience—and that are positively related to student learning and persistence. Benchmarks are used to compare each institution's performance to that of similar institutions and with the *SENSE* Cohort. The six benchmarks of effective educational practice with entering students in community colleges are:

- Early Connections
- High Expectations and Aspirations
- Clear Academic Plan and Pathway
- Effective Track to College Readiness
- Engaged Learning, and
- 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, they 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.

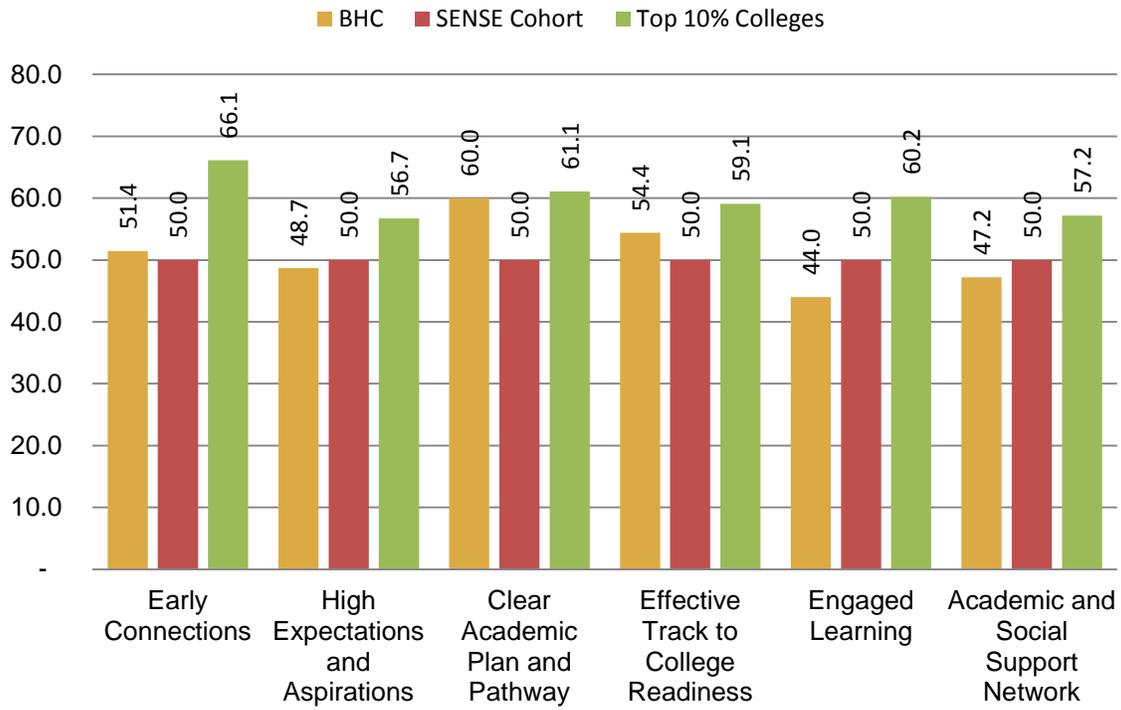
Engaged Learning

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.

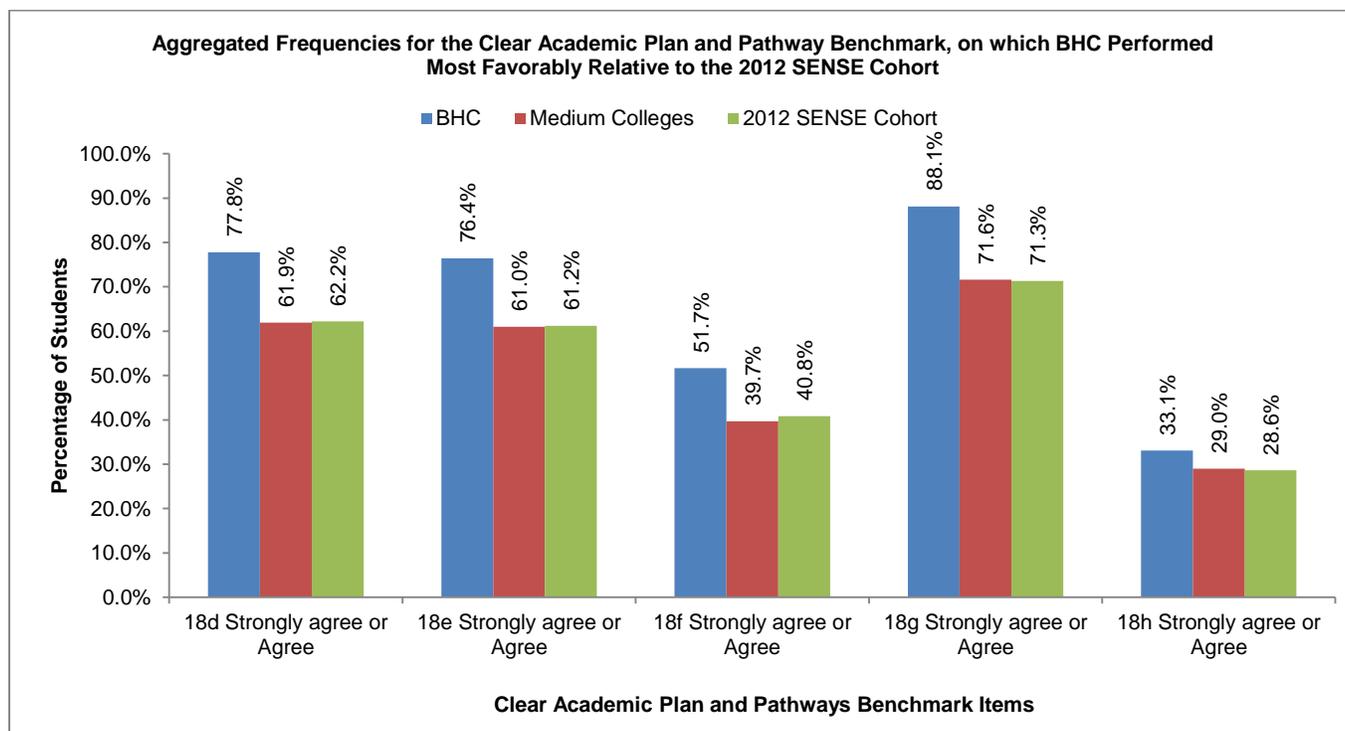
Academic and Social Support Network

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.

SENSE Benchmark Scores for Black Hawk College

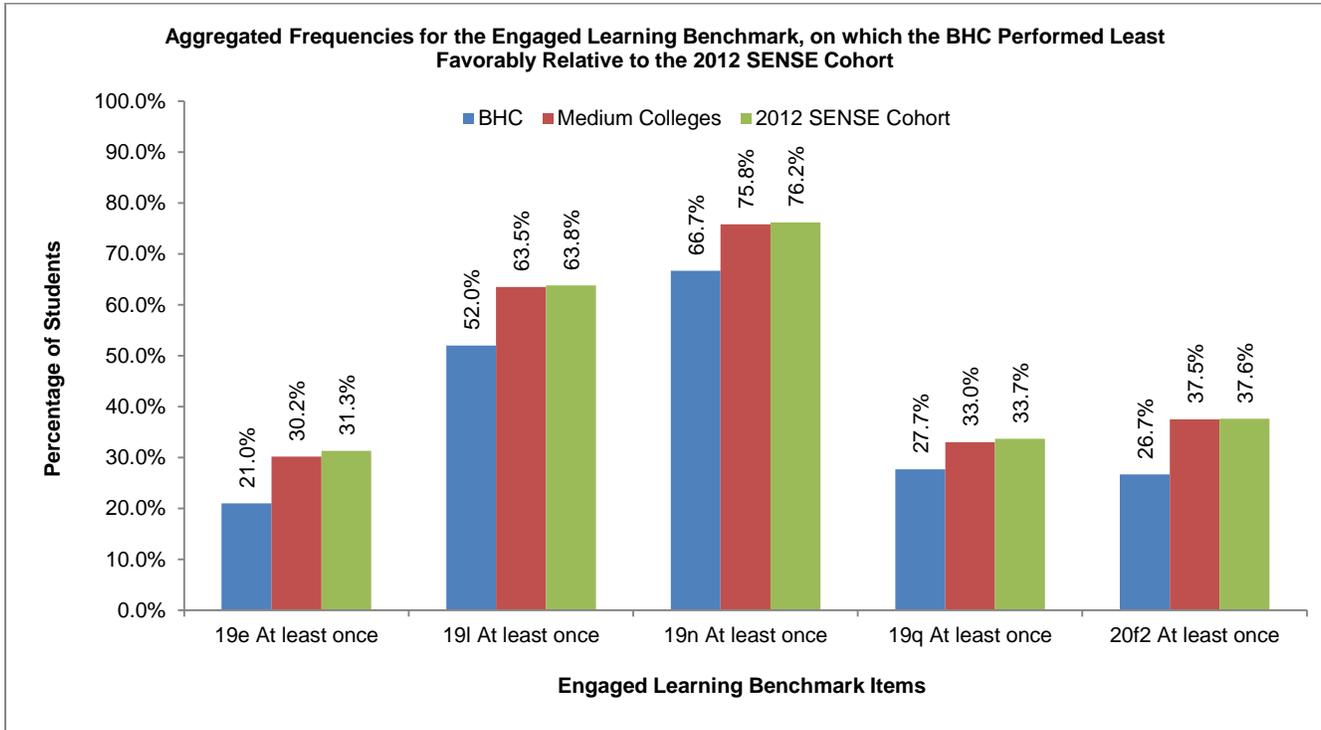


Aspects of Highest Student Engagement



Benchmark	Item Number	Item
Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	18d	Able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me
Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	18e	An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major
Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	18f	An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them
Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	18g	An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter
Clear Academic Plan and Pathway	18h	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

Aspects of Lowest Student Engagement



Benchmark	Item Number	Item
Engaged Learning	19e	Frequency: Participated in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student)
Engaged Learning	19l	Frequency: Used an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Website, etc.) to communicate with an instructor about coursework
Engaged Learning	19n	Frequency: Asked for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class
Engaged Learning	19q	Frequency: Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class
Engaged Learning	20f2	Frequency: Used writing, math, or other skill lab

Additional Questions included in the Engaged Learning Benchmark:

- 19a Frequency: Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions
- 19b Frequency: Prepare at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
- 19g Frequency: Work with other students on a project or assignment during class
- 19h Frequency: Work with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments
- 19i Frequency: Participate in a required study group outside of class
- 19j Frequency: Participate in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class
- 19k Frequency: Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with another student about coursework
- 19m Frequency: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor
- 19o Frequency: Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance
- 20d2 Frequency of use: Face-to-face tutoring
- 20h2 Frequency of use: Computer lab