



## 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.

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### *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%
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## 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.

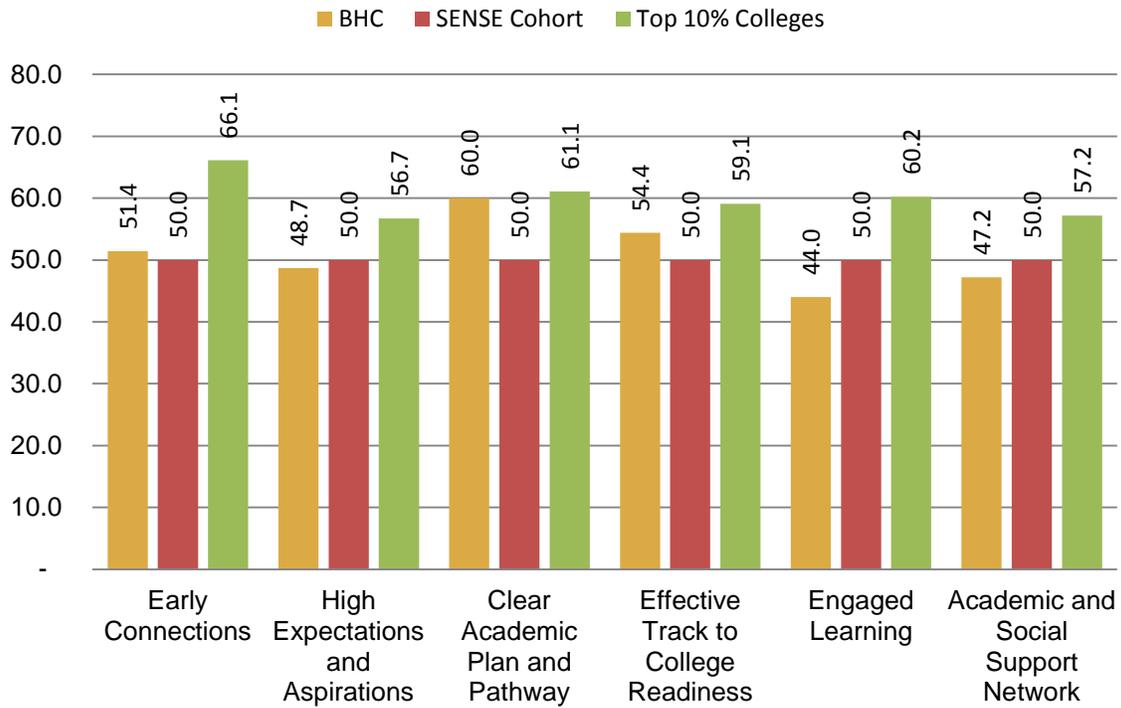
### **Engaged Learning**

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.

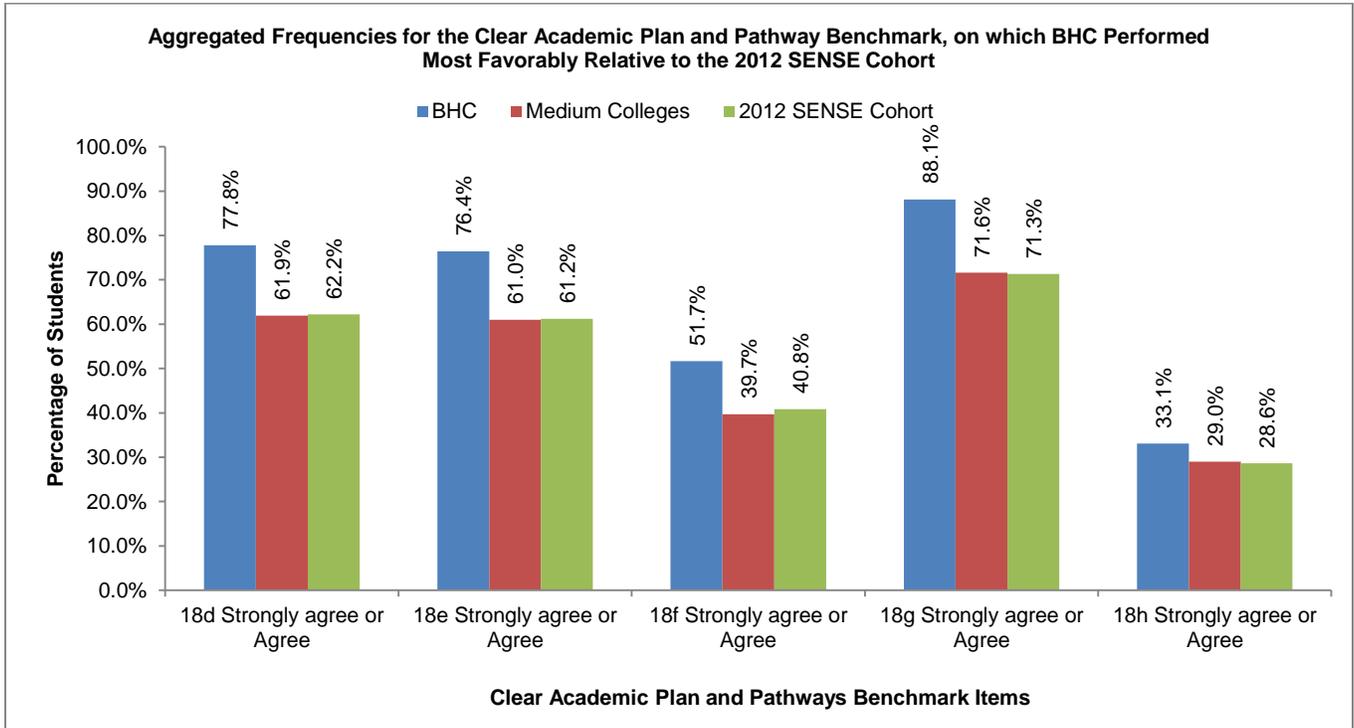
### **Academic and Social Support Network**

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

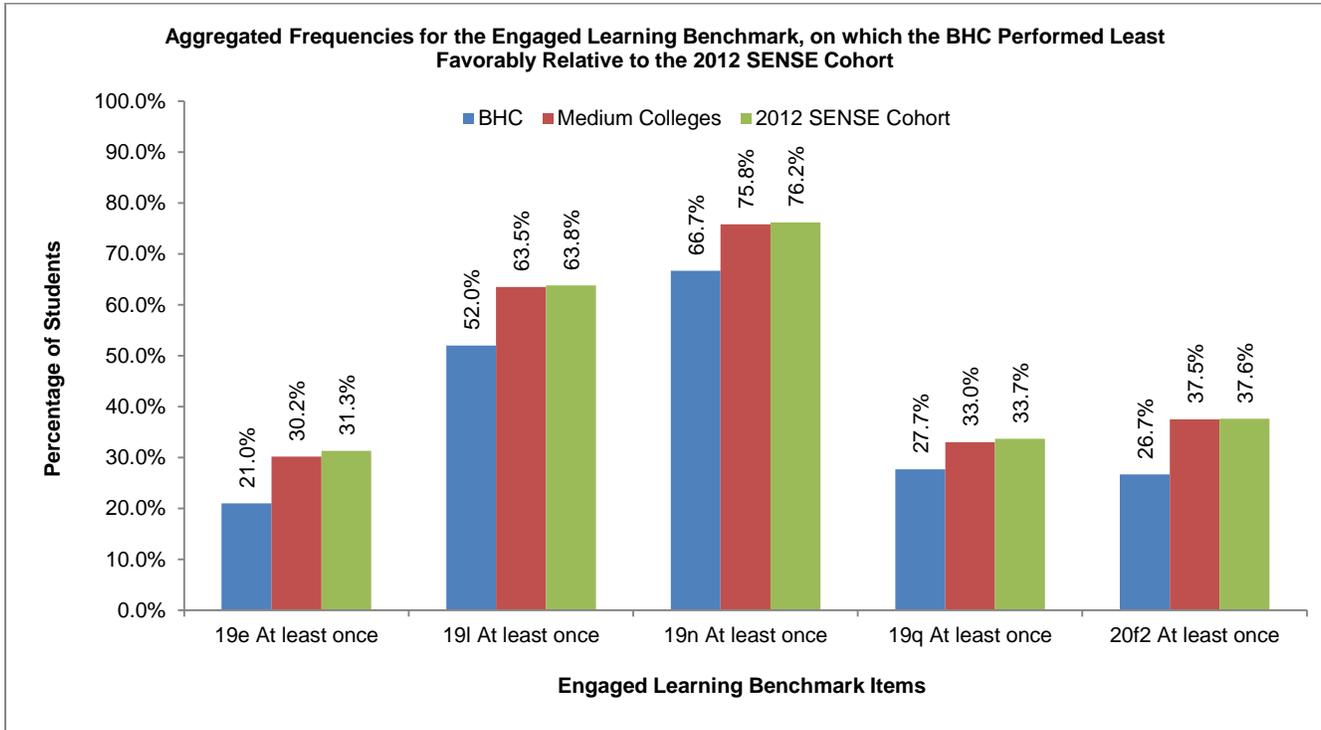


## Aspects of Highest Student Engagement



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



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#### **Benchmarks for “Percent of Target”:**

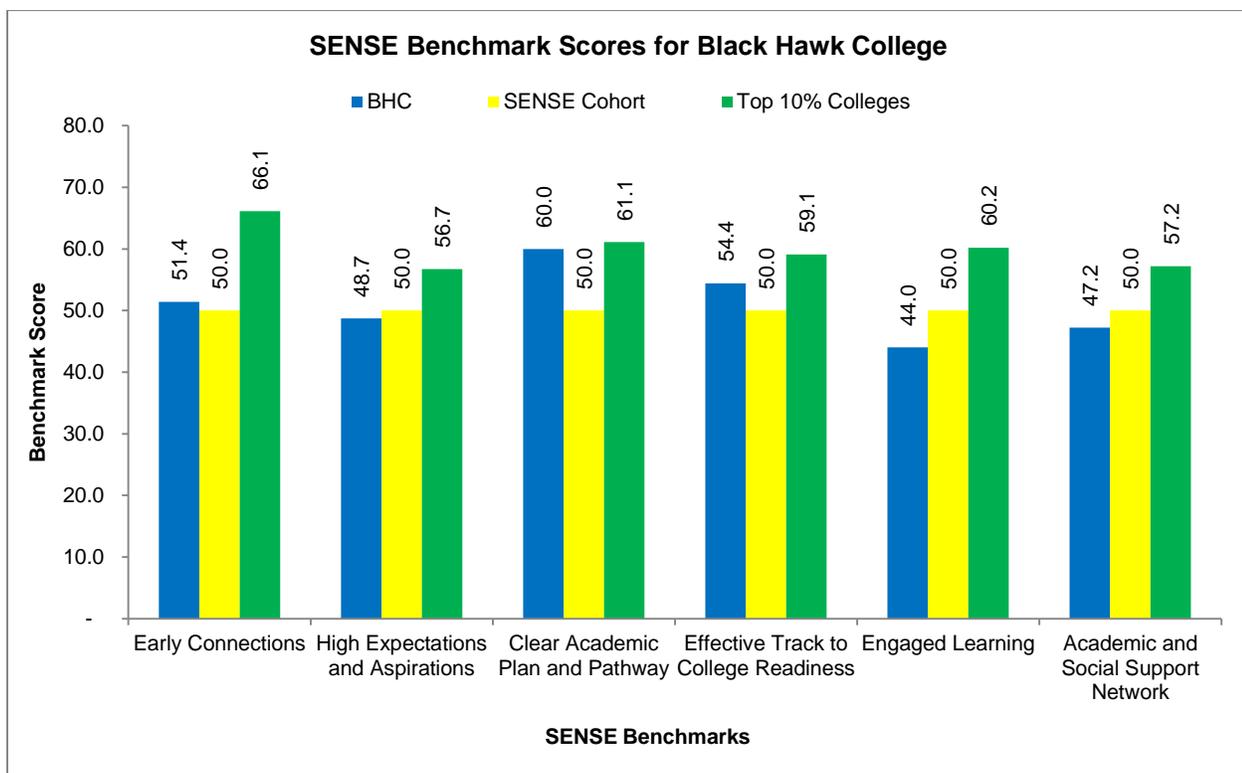
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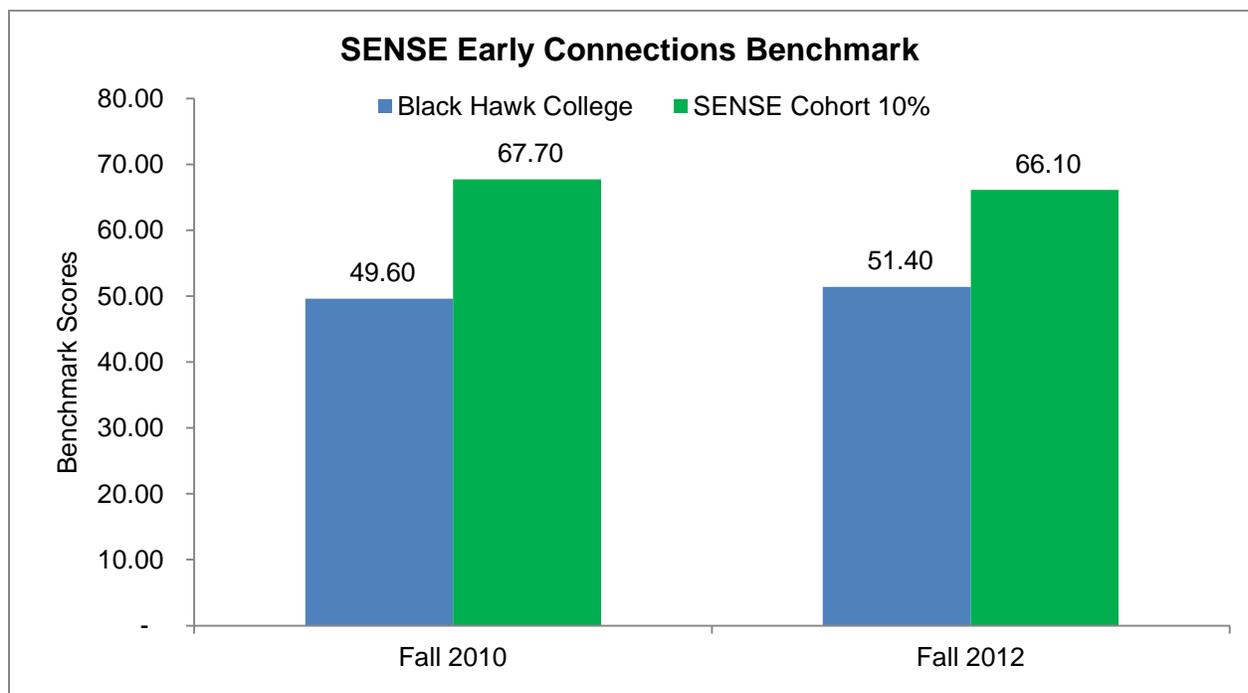


## SENSE Fall 2010 to Fall 2012 Benchmarks Scores

### 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.

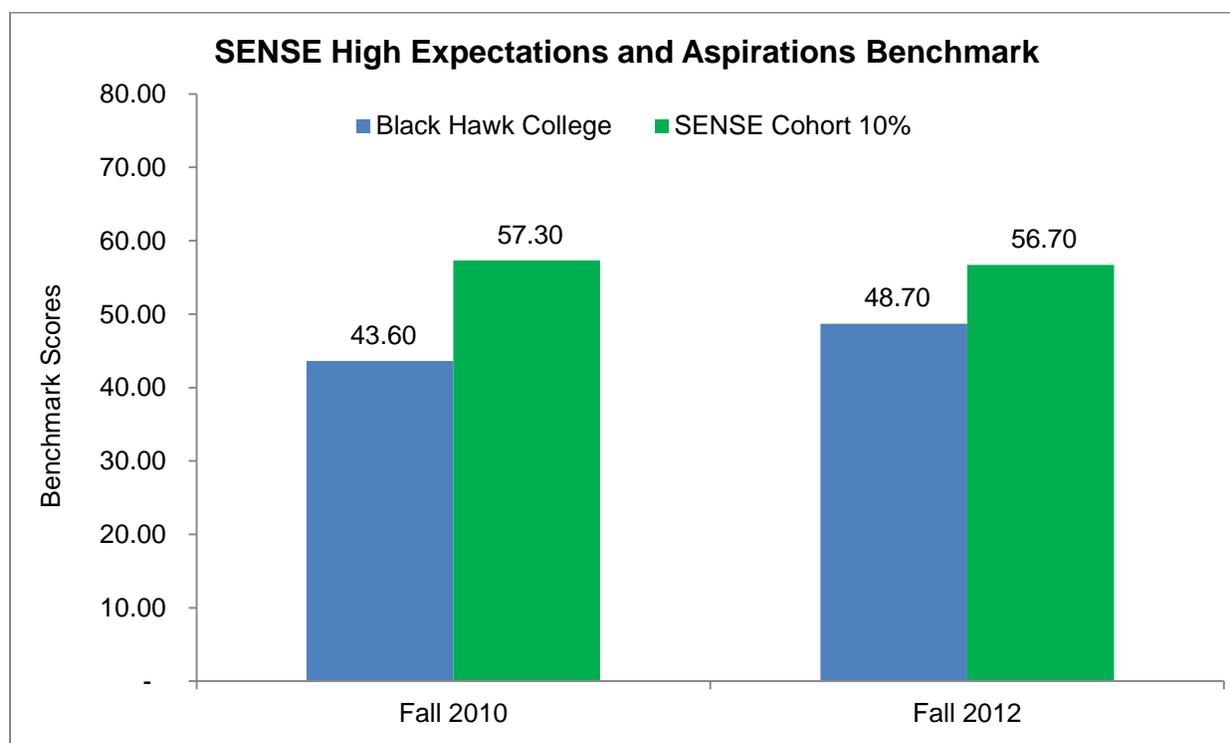
Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Strongly Agree or Agree</b>			
18a	Agreement: The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome	69.1%	76.7%
18i	Agreement: The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)	48.5%	49.1%
18j	Agreement: A college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance	31.1%	37.5%
18p	Agreement: At least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name	39.2%	44.9%
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Yes</b>			
23	Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance?	20.3%	32.0%



## 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.

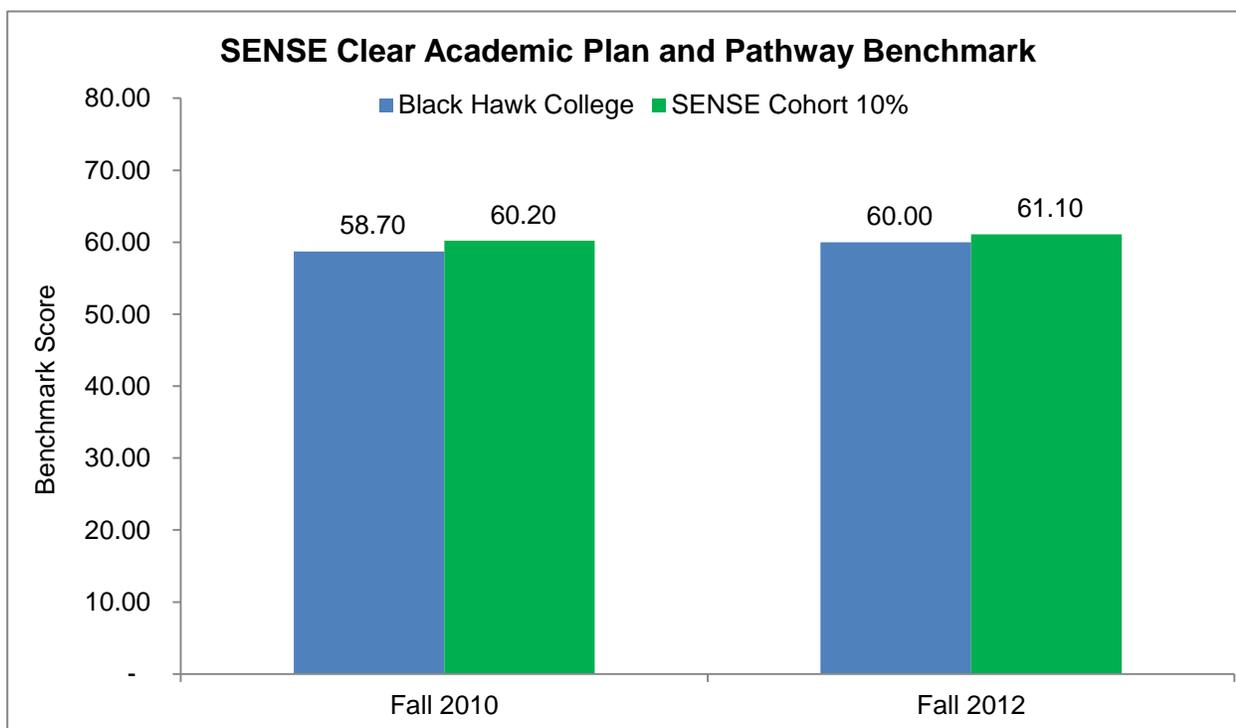
Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Strongly Agree or Agree</b>			
18b	Agreement: The instructors at this college want me to succeed	83.0%	82.4%
18t	Agreement: I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college	86.5%	91.3%
18u	Agreement: I am prepared academically to succeed in college	82.8%	87.9%
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Two or More Times in a Week</b>			
19c	Frequency: Turn in an assignment late	9.1%	6.1%
19d	Frequency: Not turn in an assignment	11.3%	8.3%
19f	Frequency: Come to class without completing readings or assignments	22.4%	17.0%
19s	Frequency: Skip class	18.2%	7.6%



### Clear Academic Plan and Pathway (BHC's Highest Student Engagement Score)

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.

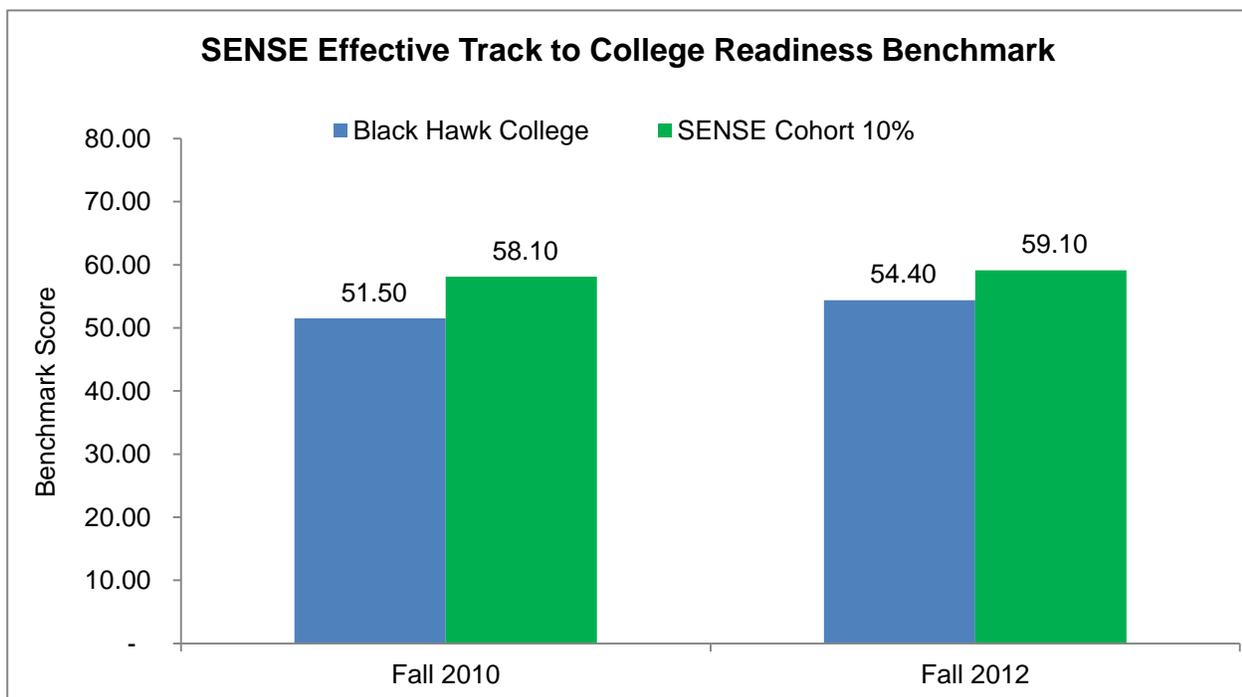
Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Strongly Agree or Agree</b>			
18d	Agreement: I was able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me	79.9%	77.7%
18e	Agreement: An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major	75.0%	76.4%
18f	Agreement: An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them	47.1%	51.9%
18g	Agreement: An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter	85.1%	88.0%
18h	Agreement: 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	27.7%	32.9%



## 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.

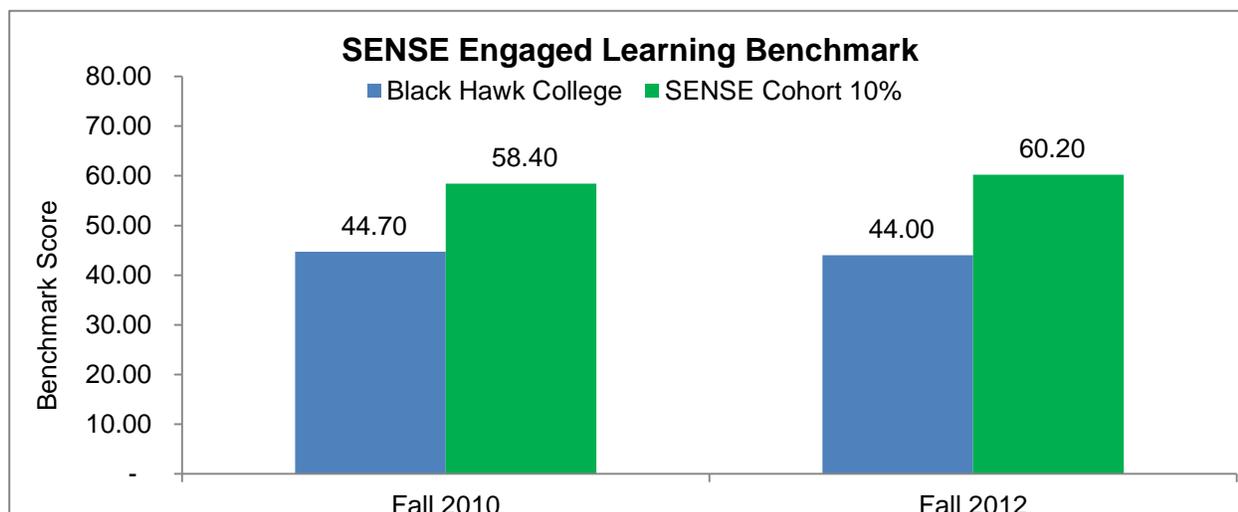
Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Yes</b>			
12a	Before I could register for classes I was required to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math	95.3%	98.3%
12b	I took a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.)	96.9%	99.4%
14	This college required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester/quarter	76.8%	80.1%
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Strongly Agree or Agree</b>			
21a	Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.)	69.4%	68.1%
21b	Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned to understand my academic strengths and weaknesses	66.9%	67.0%
21c	Agreement: Within a class or through another experience at this college, I learned skills and strategies to improve my test-taking ability	49.9%	44.7%



## Engaged Learning (BHC's Lowest Student Engagement Score)

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.

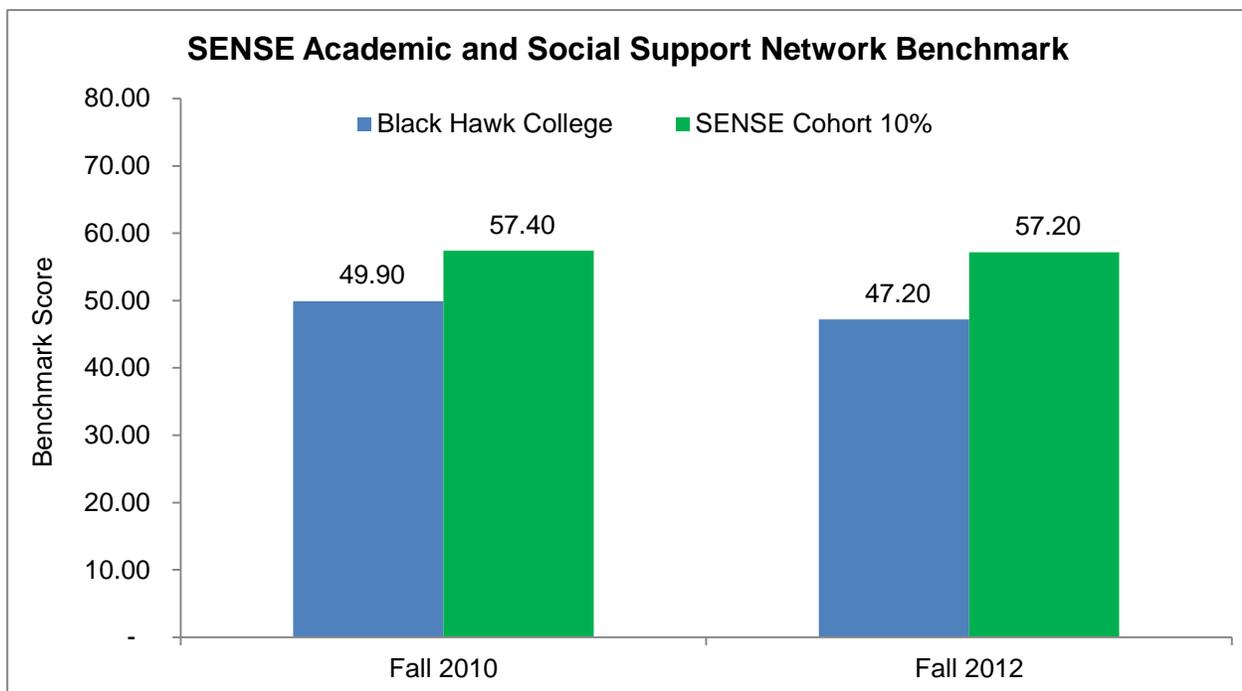
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<b>% of Entering Students Stating Two or More Times in a Week</b>			
19a	Frequency: Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions	63.9%	63.7%
19b	Frequency: Prepare at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	33.4%	37.8%
19e	Frequency: Participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student)	12.1%	10.5%
19g	Frequency: Work with other students on a project or assignment during class	58.7%	49.9%
19h	Frequency: Work with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments	16.7%	18.0%
19i	Frequency: Participate in a required study group outside of class	4.8%	6.4%
19j	Frequency: Participate in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class	6.5%	7.6%
19k	Frequency: Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with another student about coursework	37.9%	36.5%
19l	Frequency: Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with an instructor about coursework	33.1%	27.2%
19m	Frequency: Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor	29.3%	27.0%
19n	Frequency: Ask for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to a class	40.5%	34.5%
19o	Frequency: Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance	44.2%	38.9%
19q	Frequency: Discuss ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class	10.7%	11.7%
20d2	Frequency of use: Face-to-face tutoring	5.3%	4.8%
20f2	Frequency of use: Writing, math, or other skill lab	16.7%	20.2%
20h2	Frequency of use: Computer lab	29.9%	31.1%



## 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.

Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Two or More Times in a Week</b>			
18l	Agreement: All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college	60.0%	56.8%
18m	Agreement: All instructors clearly explained course grading policies	87.2%	87.5%
18n	Agreement: All instructors clearly explained course syllabi (syllabuses)	91.5%	91.5%
18o	Agreement: I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class	87.4%	89.1%
18q	Agreement: At least one other student whom I didn't previously know learned my name	85.1%	77.3%
18r	Agreement: At least one instructor learned my name	87.6%	86.6%
18s	Agreement: I learned the name of at least one other student in most of my classes	87.6%	81.0%



## Survey Monkey Survey Invitation to Faculty to Participate: Fall 2012

Once again this past fall, Black Hawk College participated in an exciting national survey research project, the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*). The project is part of the Center for Community College Student Engagement and the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin.

Administered during the fourth and fifth class weeks of the recent fall academic term, *SENSE* focuses on institutional practices and student behaviors in the earliest weeks of college. As research shows, understanding students' earliest experiences can help us enhance student learning, retention, and success.

Survey data will be collected, analyzed, and reported back to BHC, further supporting our College's efforts to understand the critical early student experience and to improve practices in ways that will increase student success in the first college year.

The survey was administered in classes randomly selected by the Center to ensure a representative sample and to preserve the integrity of the survey results.

Black Hawk College is intent on being a leader in higher education, and this survey can assist us in improving course completion rates, as well as the rate of student persistence to the completion of their educational goals.

To increase faculty participation in this process, the Center has developed a **SENSE Faculty Predictions Exercise**. This exercise was presented to the Common Sense Committee for their recommendation on how best to use this assessment tool. The Common Sense Committee recommended giving the exercise to all full-time faculty.

The tool is very simple. The tool asks a faculty member to predict the responses of our students for a series of questions. For example, predict the percentage of students who responded "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to the following question, "The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome." After completing the exercise, the College can compare faculty response to those of the students and identify gaps and alignments, which can use to facilitate discussions. The Common Sense Committee will be responsible for reviewing the identified gaps and alignments and make recommendations for improvements.

The Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness will use Survey Monkey to administer the exercise. I would encourage all of you to complete the exercise in order to help College administrators, faculty, and staff increase their understanding of today's typical college student.

**Faculty Predictions Exercise**



The following are items from the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*), the results of which we plan to use to assess student engagement and improve college performance. We invite you to predict the responses our students gave on these select items. Results from this exercise can be compared against our *SENSE* results. The alignments and/or gaps between student responses and faculty responses can help facilitate important discussions. Please note that for all of the following survey items, students were asked to reflect on their experiences from the time of their decision to attend this college through the end of the first three weeks of their first semester/quarter.

#18 This set of items asks you about your earliest experiences at this college.	Students who responded AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE	
	Faculty Prediction (%)	Student's Actual (%)
a. The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome	59.4	76.5
b. The instructors at this college want me to succeed	68.0	82.3
c. All the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter were available at times convenient for me	53.3	78.8
k. All instructors had activities to introduce students to one another	37.2	22.7
l. All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college	42.3	56.7
m. All instructors clearly explained course grading policies	67.8	87.4
n. All instructors clearly explained course syllabi (syllabuses)	67.7	91.6
o. I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class	72.4	89.1
r. At least one instructor learned my name	71.0	86.7
u. I am prepared academically to succeed in college	64.5	87.4
#19 About how often did you do the following?	Students who responded 2 OR MORE TIMES	
	Faculty Prediction (%)	Student's Actual (%)
a. Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions	40.4	63.8
b. Prepare at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	20.3	37.8
c. Turn in an assignment late	47.3	6.2

#19 About how often did you do the following?	Students who responded 2 OR MORE TIMES	
	Faculty Prediction (%)	Student's Actual (%)
d. Not turn in an assignment	35.9	8.1
e. Participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student)	21.1	10.4
f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	66.5	16.8
g. Work with other students on a project or assignment during class	45.5	50.1
h. Work with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments	30.3	18.2
i. Participate in a required study group outside of class	33.0	6.5
j. Participate in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class	18.9	7.5
l. Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with an instructor about coursework	55.9	27.4
m. Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor	36.8	27.0
n. Ask for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to class	34.5	34.6
o. Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance	46.0	39.0
p. Receive grades or points on assignments, quizzes, test, or papers, etc.	66.4	89.3
q. Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class	20.4	11.6
r. Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family, co-workers, etc.)	30.3	44.2
s. Skip class	53.4	7.7
#22 What has been your MAIN source of academic advising (help with academic goal-setting, planning, course recommendations, graduation requirements, etc.)?	Students who responded INSTRUCTORS	
	Faculty Prediction (%)	Student's Actual (%)
	43.5	16.4
#27 Would you recommend this college to a friend or family member?	Students who responded YES	
	Faculty Prediction (%)	Student's Actual (%)
	64.1	96.6