



## 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”:**

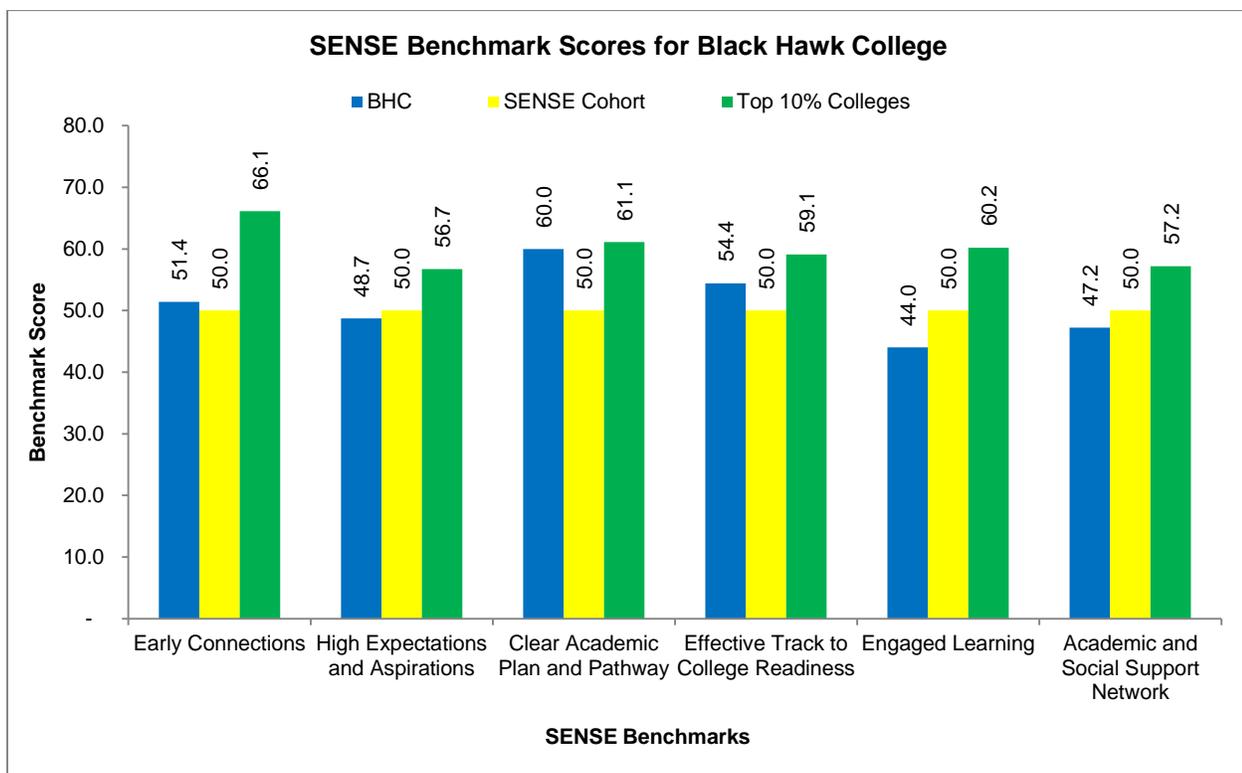
- All Colleges in 2012 *SENSE* Cohort: 50.0%
- All Medium Colleges in Cohort: 52.6%

## 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:

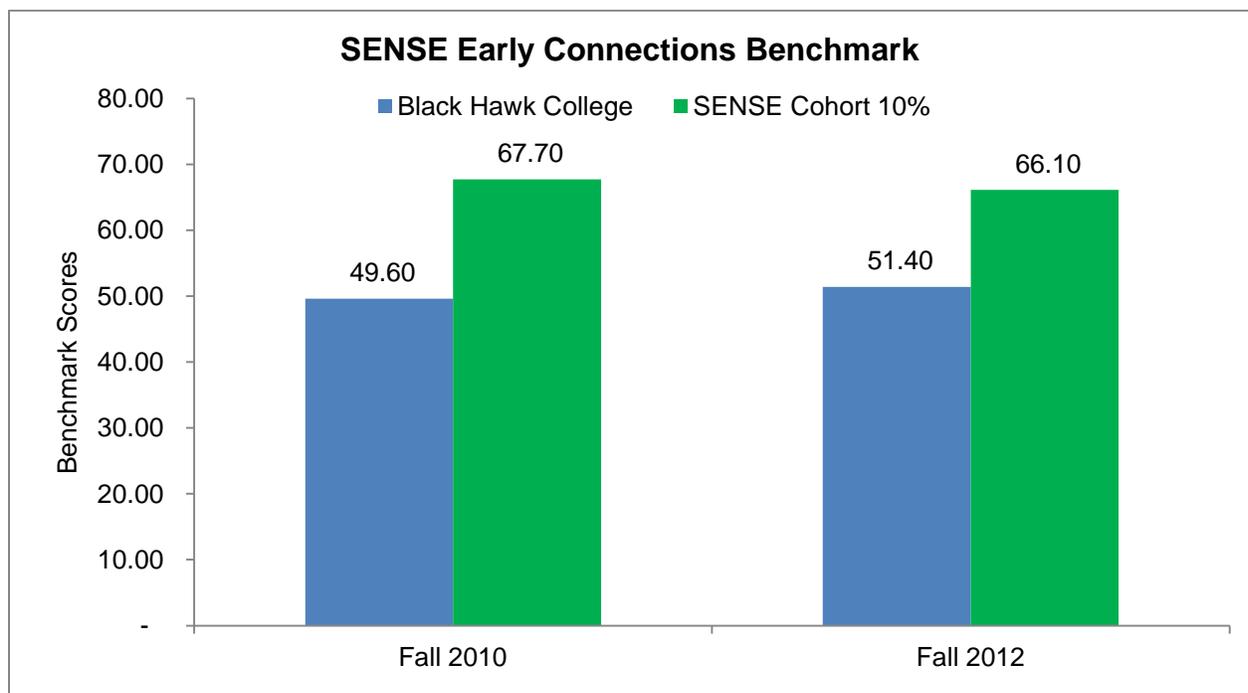


## SENSE Fall 2010 to Fall 2012 Benchmarks Scores

### 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.

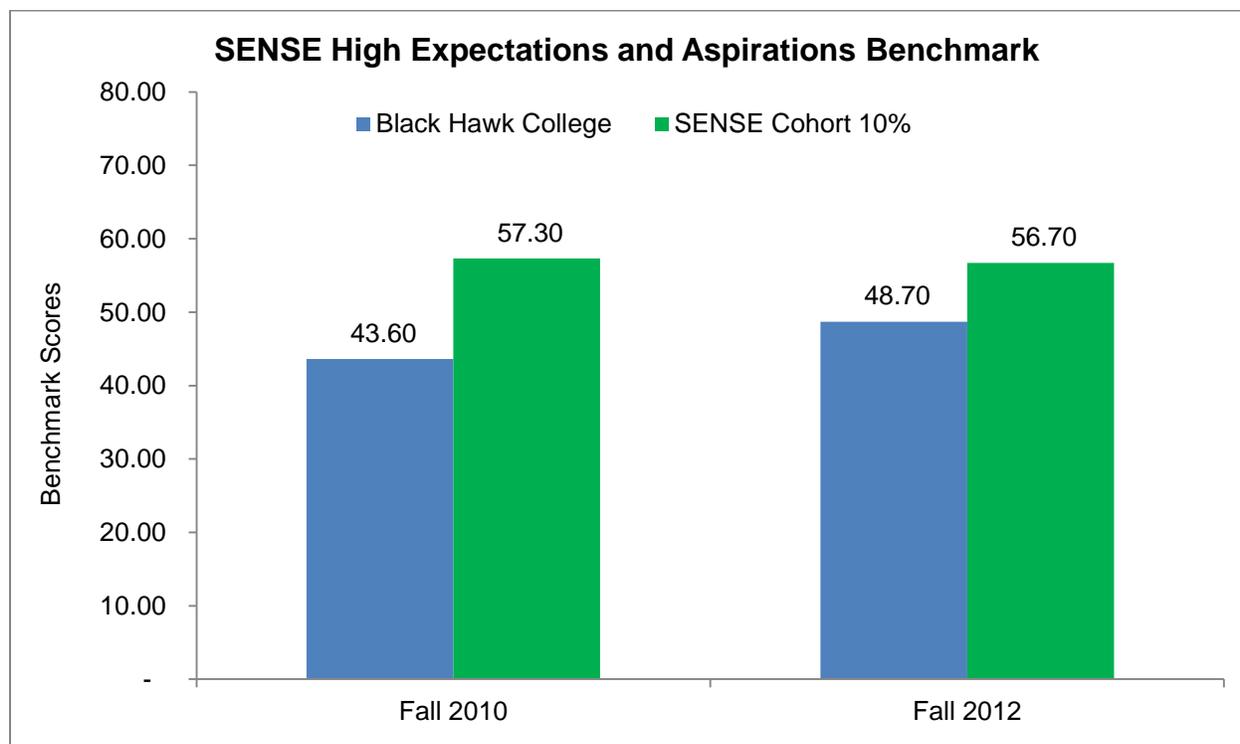
Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Strongly Agree or Agree</b>			
18a	Agreement: The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome	69.1%	76.7%
18i	Agreement: The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, 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.

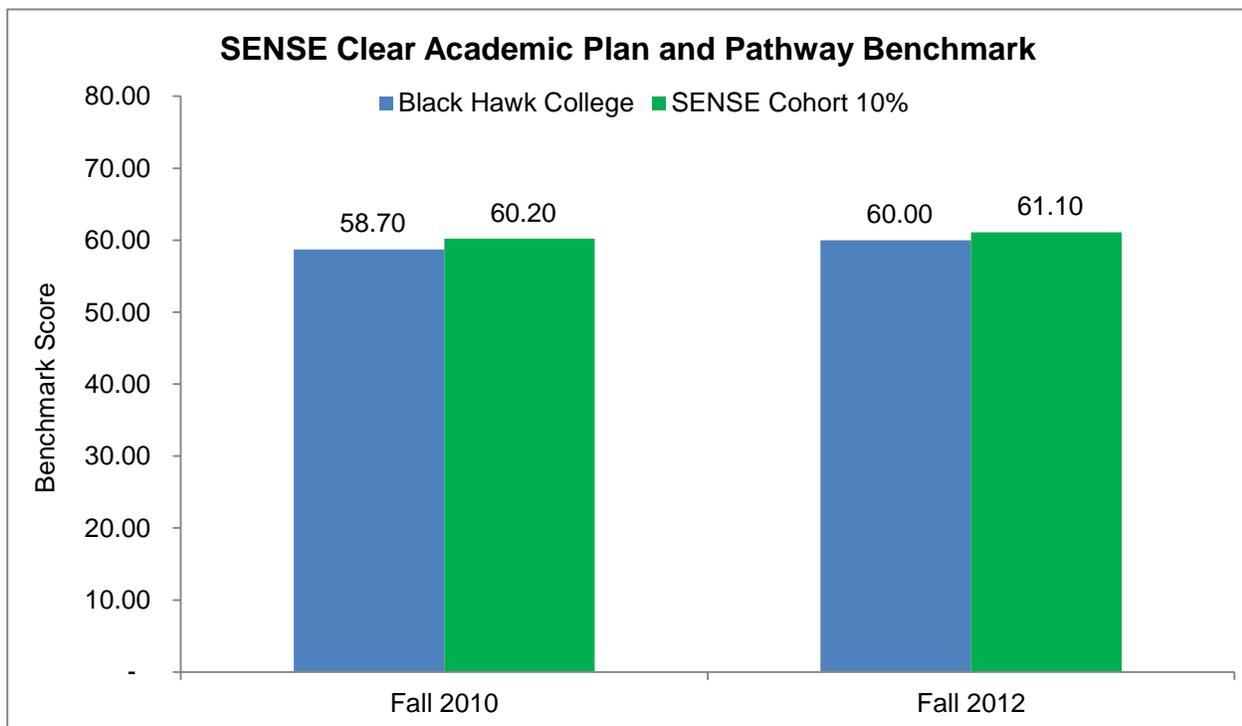
Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Strongly Agree or Agree</b>			
18b	Agreement: The instructors at this college want me to succeed	83.0%	82.4%
18t	Agreement: I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college	86.5%	91.3%
18u	Agreement: I am 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.

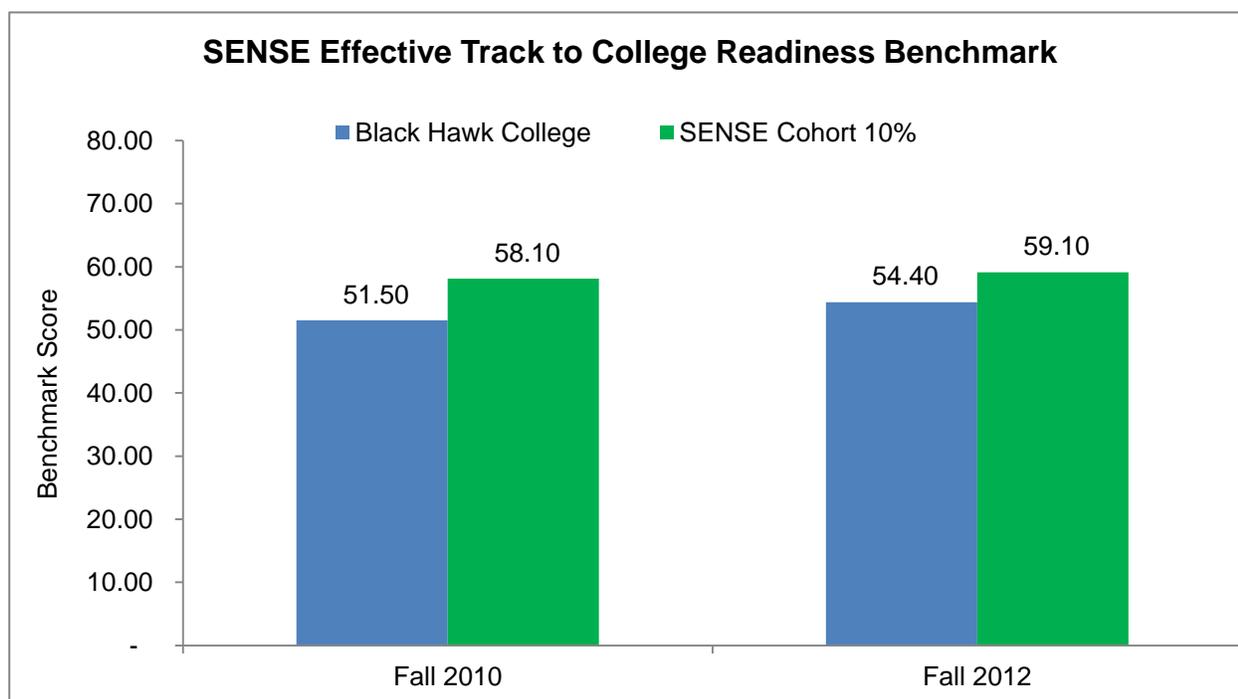
Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Strongly Agree or Agree</b>			
18d	Agreement: I was able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me	79.9%	77.7%
18e	Agreement: An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major	75.0%	76.4%
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.

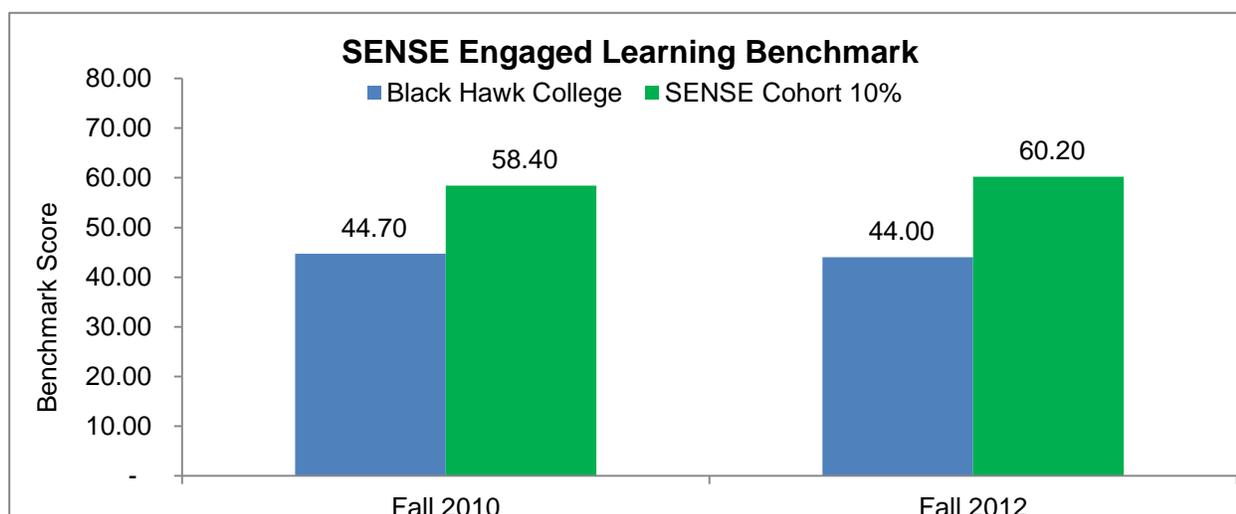
Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<b>% of Entering Students Stating Yes</b>			
12a	Before I could register for classes I was required to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math	95.3%	98.3%
12b	I took a placement 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.

Question #	SENSE Questions	Fall 2010	Fall 2012
<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%

