



Written Testimony for the Senate Higher Education Committee
Interim Hearing – June 24, 2010
Charge 2#: *Community Colleges*

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Community Colleges

Panel 4: *analyzing success rates of similar cohorts of students by comparing those who begin at community colleges with those who begin at four-year institutions*

I. Community Colleges Are Critical to *Closing the Gaps*

- i. It is clear that *Closing the Gaps* (CTG) progress to date is largely due to enrollment growth in community colleges, and reaching 2015 participation and success targets will depend on that sector's continued enrollment growth and success of students who begin their postsecondary career at community colleges.
- ii. Although tremendous strides have been made in increasing participation in higher education, much work still remains to reach CTG success goals.
- iii. Community colleges must focus more intensely on improving student success by providing adequate resources to support student transfer and completion.

II. Analyzing Success Rates of Similar Student Cohorts

A. Graduation Rates

- i. First-time entering full-time undergraduates who enrolled in Texas public *universities* in fall 2003 had a six-year graduate rate of 55.9%. These students received a baccalaureate or above in or within the six years.
- ii. First-time entering full-time undergraduates who enrolled in *community and technical colleges* the same year had a graduation rate of 30.4%. These students received a baccalaureate or above, an associate's, or a certificate in or within the six years.
- iii. It is important to note the differences in the university and community college student bodies when comparing statewide graduation rates. More academically prepared students enroll in universities. For example:
 - 78% of students entering universities met Texas Success Initiative (TSI) standards which determine a student's readiness to enroll in college bearing courses

- 34% of students entering community colleges met (TSI) standards

B. Transfer

- i. Creating a seamless transfer pathway between community colleges and universities is critical. Only 29 percent of degree seeking first-time in college students transferred to a university after six-years in FY 2009.
- ii. Students that do transfer do well and graduate at high rates.
- iii. For example, 78.3% of students who completed the core curriculum prior to transfer in fall 2007 enrolled the following semester, and 51% of these students earned a 3.0 GPA or higher their first year at a university.
- iv. If you consider those students who have completed at least 30 semester credit hours at a community college and transfer to a university, the graduation rate is 55.1 percent.