

College Student Achievement Project



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Acknowledgment:

The College Student Achievement Project is sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

AUGUST 2013

Welcome back to the new school year! The summer seems to go by so quickly and the CSAP team is looking forward to a very exciting fall. Here is a sneak preview of some of the events we have coming up.

Cycle One Research Update

We finally managed to collect and validate the data concerning the cohort of students who entered college in fall 2011. A preliminary report of this research will be published in September. It was a big job and we would like to thank all of our CSAP college leads for their hard work in this regard. The report will cover student participation and achievement, in mathematics and language, in the first and second semester of their college programs. As with most research, the data raises as many questions as it answers and this preliminary report will be discussed at a special provincial forum to be held on October 25th in Toronto. The report will also be available for any local or regional forums being held around the province in early 2014. In the meantime, if you have need of a speaker or a presentation on this research for a forum or just for a school or college professional activity workshop, please contact us at csap@senecacollege.ca. We will do whatever we can to help you. At a later date we will unveil the new CSAP interactive database so that you can probe the data for yourself.

Assessment of Students' Mathematics Skills

Over the past several months, colleges and college faculty and administrators have been discussing the recommendations of a discussion paper on the development of a common, province-wide system tool for assessing the mathematics skills that students need to begin a college diploma (or certificate) program with confidence. We are glad to report that not only is there a strong consensus to develop such a system but also it will be a system that is not just for college use, but also for the general public, especially students who are thinking about applying to college and want to see if they possess the requisite numeracy and

so that students can upgrade their skills at home or at school. We are very excited about the prospect of this development and hope that it can be ready for use by early 2015. In addition, a common set of learning outcomes for foundational mathematics courses will be developed. These outcomes will not only form the basis for the assessment, but will also enable secondary schools to become more informed about the mathematics skills that colleges expect secondary school graduates to have mastered. We look forward to sharing more on these developments as the academic year progresses.

College Students' Language Achievement

For the first time, we will be reporting on the data collected regarding students' achievement in first semester college communications courses. Our analysis of the data on participation, achievement and secondary school background in English/French will provide interesting discussion points for the Provincial Forum, particularly related to the ministry's organization of the curriculum where courses are linked to a postsecondary destination. We look forward to sharing the results of our analysis in October.

Other data around the grades achieved by students, the correlation between age and achievement, and between gender and achievement should provide the basis for discussion and may lead to recommendations for future action for both schools and colleges.

Shortly after the publication of the Preliminary Research Report, we will be distributing a report containing a case study of how reading, writing and oral communication skills are taught in two programs at four colleges per program. The report also provides a summary of the main topics taught in regular first semester writing courses, and in remedial and developmental courses. The report concludes with a gap analysis between topics taught in Grades 8 - 12 English and French courses and the literacy skills required for success in college courses.

Stay tuned!

CSAP Provincial Forum – October 25

The CSAP will soon be sending out invitations to its first provincial forum to be held in Toronto on October 25th. The theme of the forum will be Essential Skills for College Success and will feature a general discussion among representatives of schools and colleges of the CSAP research. We are honoured that the keynote speaker at lunch will be Mr Craig Alexander, Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist of the TD Bank Group. Mr Alexander is an eloquent advocate for greater literacy and numeracy and will help motivate participants to seek for innovative and creative solutions to the challenges that the CSAP research program has shown. The main part of the forum will be the interactive deliberations of the participants. We are putting together a technology rich forum at which everyone can contribute at all times. We hope that the new format will be stimulating and productive. Space at the forum is limited. If you would like to attend, please contact us at csap@senecacollege.ca. We will send you an invitation if space is available.

To join the CSAP mailing list and receive regular email updates about the project, send us an email at csap@senecacollege.ca.

The logo for Seneca College, featuring the word "Seneca" in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

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