

**Darton State College**  
**Complete College Georgia 2013 Update**

**Part I: Updates, Progress, and Future Work**

**CCG Goal:** Shorten time to degree

**Initiative:** Increase student use of our Credit by Exam option

- **Update/Progress:** The Business/Social Science Division has created a database of credit by exam (CBE) courses. This database and explanation of the CBE process will become part of the adult learner page on the Darton State College website beginning Fall 2013. We are still in the process of working on our database that contains a list of all available CBE options for the campus. However, by working with deans and individual instructors, students are able to discuss their CBE options. We have learned that our science courses pose the largest hindrance, as the lab portion of the course is difficult to replicate through a CBE option. This is also true for our communications courses, as students must show oral competency. Nevertheless, through consistent advertising, we have seen success in our increased CBE efforts. For example, we have seen a large increase our foreign language CBE numbers due to increased advertising. From August 2012 to April 2013, over fifty students took advantage of our foreign language testing program.
- **Future Work:** Using the foreign language program and the Business/Social Science Division as our guides, we plan to continue to advertise the CBE option in the hopes of increasing the number of students who use this option. By working with the Testing Center, Advising Center, Center for Teaching and Learning, Registrar's Office, and individual academic advisors, we hope that more students will be made aware of ways to prepare for and test out of courses for which they hold prior knowledge.

**CCG Goal:** Shorten time to degree

**Initiative:** Award Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Credit to students

- **Update/Progress:** Darton State College now has two faculty members who have completed training through the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and are certified PLA assessors. We also have a number of faculty and staff members who are ACE and SOCMAR trained.
- **Future Work:** Beginning Fall 2013, Darton State College will implement policies and procedures and begin informing faculty and staff regarding the PLA process. Information about PLA will be available on the Darton State College website. PLA allows adult learners to earn college credit for what they already know, thereby decreasing time to graduation and tuition costs. This serves as an incentive for adults, especially those who have earned some college credit, to return to college and complete a degree. Additionally, research from the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning illustrates that students that receive some form of PLA credit are more likely to complete a degree than non-PLA students (Research Brief, April 2011). We intend to institute a prior learning documentation course (PLA 2000). This course will be taught by the prior learning coordinator and will assist students in preparing a portfolio that is eligible for credit assessment. It is intended that the documentation preparation course will be a 2 credit hour course that could be used for general elective hours for the major. In addition to assisting students in the preparation of a portfolio, the course will review the nature of learning and will be a good course to ease non-traditional students back into higher education. A workshop will also be developed for Faculty to understand the Ten Standards of Assessing Learning (Fiddler et. al. 2006). The workshop will be offered at all

faculty and staff development days and will be a prerequisite for faculty members to serve as portfolio assessors.

**CCG Goal:** Increase partnerships with K-12

**Initiative:** Increase participation in our ACCEL and Move on When Ready (MOWR) program

- **Update/Progress:** In Fall 2012, we began offering courses on the campus of Albany High School. This program allowed us to offer the ACCEL program to students who were academically prepared but did not have the financial resources to travel to campus. After the success of this program, we were approached by a number of different schools and home school associations who were interested in a similar outreach program.
- **Future Work:** Though ACCEL/MOWR students do not have problems with access to education in the traditional sense, they often have trouble with actually getting to campus, especially in our area. Some of our best and brightest students cannot afford to travel from as far away as Worth County High School to our campus. By bringing our instructors to them, we eliminate the problem of transportation, so low-income students can take advantage of this program.

**CCG Goal:** Improving access and completion for traditionally underserved students

**Initiative:** Improve access to information and increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rates for part-time, adult, and working students

- **Update/Progress:** Darton State College implemented an adult recruiting event in Summer 2013. The event was primarily designed for adult learners who had previously attended Darton, but it was also open to any adult in Darton's service region. In response to the success of the adult recruiting event, we will now host this orientation annually but will also host an adult-only registration day. We have also established a free online math preparation course available to prospective students. 344 prospective students have registered for the course in the past month. Many adults do not return to college for fear that they will not be able to handle the academic rigor. This course provides a means for them to build confidence as well as math skills. Prospective students can take advantage of this course prior to taking the COMPASS placement test. Our hope is that this course will enable these students to obtain higher scores on the placement exam, possibly even exempting learning support math. We have made a proposal in the Title III grant for Smarthinking.com. Smarthinking.com is an online tutoring service available 24/7 in most subjects and is accessible from any internet-connected computer. Smarthinking.com tutors are seasoned educators - 90% have an advanced degree in their fields, and they average over nine years of teaching or tutoring experience.
- **Future Work:** We are currently constructing a new career center computer lab to help with group assessments and career exploration to assist a larger number of underserved and non-traditional students and individuals prior to entering Darton State. We believe this will encourage more adult and working Georgians, especially those who already have some college credits, to complete a college degree. We have also opened up our Writing and Reading Labs to be open to all students who need assistance in these areas for any subject, not just those who are enrolled in learning support classes. These labs are open until 9:00 p.m., making them more accessible for working students.

**CCG Goal:** Improving access and completion for traditionally underserved students

**Initiative:** Improve access to information and increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rates for military students

- **Update/Progress:** Darton State College has a fully functional Military Resource Center and a newly designed website that is accessible from Darton's homepage. This website has

access to all of the resources that a potential student would need, including specific information about financial aid, admissions, and services for our military students and their spouses. We also offer a nursing bridge program at Fort Benning, Georgia, so that students will not have to travel off base to obtain their education. Finally, we offer a fully online music program for military musicians, and last August, we hired a former military musician and educator as a member of our music faculty to help assist these students. For more information about our military resources, please visit [www.dcmrc.com](http://www.dcmrc.com).

- **Future Work:** We are constantly working closely with military personnel from the Marine Corps Logistics Base to inform them of the educational opportunities available to their personnel. We hope that our continued efforts to serve and market toward our military students will continue to yield positive results.

**CCG Goal:** Restructuring instructional delivery

**Initiative:** Increase the number of students who successfully exit ENGL 1101 and 1102 by their second attempt

- **Update/Progress:** The Intensive Composition and Reading Review (ICRR) workshop has made strides towards improving the performance of students taking ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102. Data is tracked each semester to assess the need for tweaking the ICRR program; student success in these classes is tracked via reports generated each year to determine the percentage of students who have succeeded and not succeeded in these classes. In the Fall 2012 semester, students who had failed ENGL 1101 and 1102 previously were required to enroll in the ICRR workshop. 38 percent of the 1101 ICRR students went on to successfully complete ENGL 1101 that semester; 59 percent of students enrolled in the 1102 ICRR workshop went on to pass the ENGL 1102 course. This effort - along with the availability of the Writing Center in on-campus and online formats, as well as free weekly tutorial sessions available to all students – helped to bring an overall success rate of 78.10 percent of ENGL 1101 students and 79.45 percent of ENGL 1102 successfully completing the courses in two or fewer attempts since the start of the ICRR program in Fall 2011, just shy of the 80 percent pass rate that we had set as our goal.
- **Future Work:** While this success is encouraging, the major lesson we have learned is that while students may be required to enroll in the workshop, unless there is some consequence for not actually participating in the workshop, many students elect not to get the remedial assistance needed to succeed. In the 1101 ICRR, only 45 percent of the students actively participated; in the 1102 ICRR, 52 percent of the students actively participated. To that end, we are working on more closely integrating the ICRR workshop with the ENGL 1101/1102 classes, making participation in the workshop linked to the actual grade received in the classes themselves. We believe that putting some force behind the requirement of the workshop will increase the number of students who ultimately succeed in ENGL 1101/1102. We have also worked to standardize our curriculum in ENGL 1101 and 1102 more fully by creating a writing guide that students will use from ENGL 0099 to ENGL 1102 and throughout their college career. By making students aware of what the next steps are to success, we hope to increase the number of students who pass the English gateway courses by their first attempt to 80 percent in the coming semesters.

**CCG Goal:** Restructuring instructional delivery

**Initiative:** Provide support for students who have failed a gateway Math course (currently MATH 1111 or MATH 1001) in a previous semester.

- **Update/Progress:** Our efforts have not yielded a positive change in our gateway math courses. During the course of our work related to college completion, we have been working

through a process that involves our math faculty, LS math faculty, deans from the other divisions on campus, and Dr. Teresa Betkowski from the system office. Through this process, we have developed a plan that I will detail in the next section, Future Work.

- **Future Work:** Through our collaborative effort in evaluating this problem, we see that the problem should be addressed from multiple angles.
  - Placing students in the correct gateway course
    - Each division looked at each of their majors and placed them into one of three categories: already allows MATH 1001 as an option in Area A, does not currently allow MATH 1001 as an option in Area A but should, and should not offer MATH 1001 as an option in Area A. They are in the process of updating those majors that need to be updated through the proper committees. Once this is complete, we will have advisor training sessions where we educate the advisors, so they can advise students into the correct gateway math course.
  - Creating MATH 1111 and MATH 1001 courses that include Just in Time Remediation (JiTR)
    - We have a group of students who, while being qualified to take college level math based on their COMPASS scores, are not actually ready to take the course as it currently stands. In order to help these students succeed in passing their gateway math courses, the math faculty are working to create JiTR support for Math 1111 and Math 1001. We will also establish criteria that will determine when a student should be enrolled in the JiTR portion for one of these courses. A student who qualifies for the JiTR would meet with the rest of the class at the normal times. He or she would then attend two to three hours (to be determined after consultation with the system office) of JiTR. These JiTR sessions would focus on the same material that was covered in class that week and serve to reinforce the topics and answer any questions the students might have. This would provide the structured support that these students need in order to successfully navigate a college level math course.

**CCG Goal:** Transforming Remediation

**Initiative:** Full Integration of the National Center for Academic Transformation's Emporium Model for Learning Support Math

- **Update/Progress:** Our Emporium Model for Learning Support Math has been running full time since Fall 2011. During this time, we have seen our MATH 0097 pass rates increase from 40.6% to 51.9%. Our MATH 0099 pass rates have increased from 42.9% to 76.3%. During this same time, we have seen the number of students enrolled in LS Math increase from 2350 (fall, spring, summer) prior to the new program to 2949 this year due to increases in overall enrollment. All of the research we have viewed and the program leaders at other schools we have spoken to say the same thing--that a long-term commitment is necessary for this model to succeed. So while we have seen some successes, we are not satisfied with our results, and we constantly work to improve what we are doing. This has included the implementation of progress tracking reports for each student, designating a part-time employee to call all students who are not reporting for class each semester, and developing new ways for our support lab to improve student success.
- **Future Work:** We plan to use the Math 1111 and Math 1001 courses with Just in Time Remediation (JiTR) that we discussed in the previous section as alternative pathways for some Learning Support math students. We will develop a process to determine which

students should be eligible for this alternative pathway. When these students pass either Math 1111 or Math 1001 with JiTR, they will be updated as having satisfied their Learning Support Math requirements as well.

**CCG Goal:** Transforming Remediation

**Initiative:** Accelerate the amount of time it takes for students to exit Learning Support reading and English.

- **Update/Progress:** Students who were enrolled in the Learning Support English and /or Reading classes during the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters were afforded opportunities to take the COMPASS Reading and/or Writing Exit Test(s) after eight weeks of instruction. The early exit pass rates for students who were referred to test were 83% and 70% for students who were enrolled in READ 0099 and ENGL 0099 respectively. In addition, 63% of referred students exited READ 0099 and 85% of referred students exited ENGL 0099 by the mid-term week of the Spring 2013 semester. Students who successfully exited the LS classes through early exit were presented with the option to enroll in B Term gateway courses. Students who did not meet the requirements for the Early Exit Initiative or who failed to successfully pass the COMPASS Test remained in their respective LS classes. These students were then able to benefit from working with their instructors in smaller classes while completing personalized remediation plans. We have also created a Summer Bridge Initiative to provide remediation opportunities for students who fail to pass the COMPASS Placement Tests in math, writing, and/or reading. Presently, students who fail one or more of the tests are presented with the dates to retest and can sign up to take the tests again without any remediation. Through the Bridge Initiative, students who fail the COMPASS Placement Tests will now have the option to remediate skills and complete practice tests in the support labs on campus, through online assignments, and through the use of My Foundations Learning Paths.
- **Future Work:** While the pass rates for the Early Exit Tests have been promising, many students are primarily concerned with preparing for and passing the COMPASS Exit Tests. To this end, our plan is to begin pairing the LS courses with gateway courses through a proposal we call the Authentic Learning Community (ALC) Initiative. The ALC affords opportunities for specific student cohorts to be dual enrolled in ENGL 0099 and ENGL 1101. Students who score within the range of 45-59 on the COMPASS Writing Placement Test are eligible to participate in the initiative. Students in the cohort will have the opportunity to exit ENGL 0099 at mid-term or remain in the course until the end of the semester. Similarly, any student who is required to take READ 0099 can enroll in an ALC READ 0099 and an ALC U.S. History course.

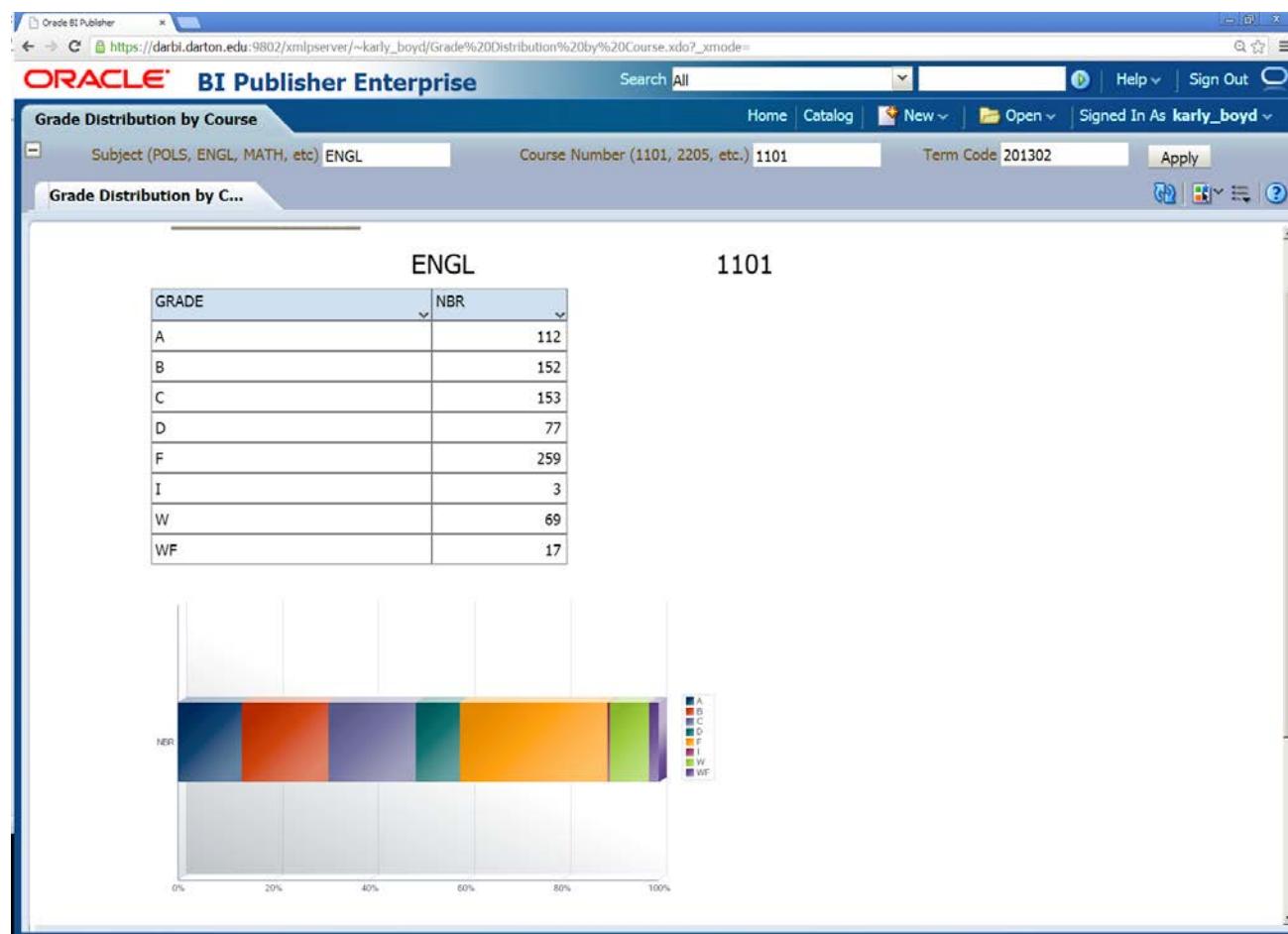
## **Part II: Partnerships**

Over the course of the past year, Darton State College has worked to increase partnerships with the business community, different K-12 providers, and our alumni. To begin with, by creating a more active Alumni Association, we have been able to work with alumni who represent all areas of business, industry, service, and education fields. These alumni provide valuable support, resources, and guidance for our academic programs and job placement. Secondly, by reaching out to the different K-12 institutions in our service area, we have been able to strengthen partnerships with these groups. This includes initiatives such as Lunch with a Leader Day and Read Across America Day at area elementary schools; offering courses on high school campuses; attending career fairs at elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the area; sending faculty members to assist high school faculty in their classrooms; sending faculty and staff members to assist high school counselors

with financial aid and admissions questions; and hosting science labs for home-school students. Additionally, the Health Sciences Division partners with Lilly Cooper Primary School in Dawson to provide free cleanings, oral health education, fluoride, and sealants as appropriate to approximately 75 second graders annually. The Humanities Division also hosts the Albany Chorale, the Dougherty County Youth Symphony, and several high school regional and state literary competitions. Finally, the Health Sciences, Nursing, Business, and Social Science divisions have active advisory committees. These advisory committees consist of individuals from the community, student body, or alumni who advise faculty within the division and certain programs regarding course offerings, trends in the market, current practices in the respective fields, and workforce needs. Advisory committee members provide feedback to the divisions on the quality of programs as well as recommendations for improvement. The division uses the survey data to inform change within courses and programs.

### Part III: Key Observations and Evidence

Our Complete College Georgia committee at Darton State is continually monitoring and assessing progress and meeting with key personnel to ensure progress is being made and data is being collected. We are closely monitoring utilization of student support services, credit accumulation of both part-time and full-time students, learning support and gateway course success rates, and overall retention rates. We have created reports and dashboards in Oracle BI Publisher to have easy access to real-time data. The following is a screen shot of a report we utilize regarding gateway course success from BI Publisher.



#### **Part IV: Sharing Lessons Learned**

What we have learned through completing our campus plans at Darton State College is three-fold. To begin with, it is important to start collecting data right away, as some of the initiatives that are put in place may not be working. It is important to continuously find ways to improve initiatives and not follow a “set it and forget it” model. Secondly, after examining our data, we found that we were, in fact, quite successful with some of our initiatives—earlier than we thought we would be. By celebrating the successes, we have been able to create a campus culture that creates more buy-in to the mission of CCG. This extends to our third lesson. The CCG plan cannot exist in a vacuum. It is important to inform the entire campus of the plan, have faculty and staff representation from the entire campus—including students and potential new hires—and keep them updated as data is collected and the initiatives are adapted or changed. Our campus has all of the CCG documents available for faculty viewing on our Sharepoint website, and our committee provides updates during executive council meetings, staff meetings, faculty assembly, and college development days.

We have learned several tangible lessons during the course of implementing our CCG plan. In regard to ACCEL, we have learned that is imperative to partner with parents and counselors. High school counselors like for us to schedule visits with their school, so the students can be introduced to opportunities available to them through ACCEL. Even though the students are receptive to the presentation, students seldom remember to pass the information along to parents, and when they do, it is usually only partially accurate. When we set up a visit with the high school, we immediately set up a parents’ informational meeting to occur on a separate date. Parents are more responsible in adhering to deadlines and initiating procedures to be followed as outlined on a Procedures Checklist form that we provide. We see increases in high school participation when we hold information meetings with parents.

As evidenced by our campus plan we feel very strongly that mathematics, both learning support and gateway courses, plays a key role in determining the success of our students. The key lesson we learned regarding mathematics is that we did not go far enough in our initial attempt to improve our results in these areas. Because mathematics impacts the path of every student who walks through our doors, we realized that we needed to look deeper into both our learning support and gateway courses. We also determined that we needed to further explore the relationship between the two and our students’ continuing success through their path to graduation. We detailed our plan to address these issues in the future work section of our goal to Restructure Instructional Delivery of gateway math courses and in both the update/progress and future work sections of our goal to transform remediation of learning support math. In the former we have recognized the different needs of our students and will be better addressing those needs through the creation of these augmented delivery methods. We will also be better addressing the learning support math student’s need to complete that next step of the gateway math course. The latter is being addressed by better utilizing data to make changes and add supplemental help as needed so that we continue to increase the success rates of our students in learning support mathematics.