

From the Executive Director: Data are Key to Decision Making

Data-driven decision making is an often used term, but rarely practiced. Cal-PASS takes data-driven decision making seriously. This practice enables educators to make informed decisions about practices that influence student outcomes. The Cal-PASS collaborative model engages educators from K–12, community colleges and universities to focus on student transition and success indicators. While Cal-PASS staff does not direct the educators' work, they facilitate discussion using the data with the group to decide what is important in their practice. Using this informed decision making model, educational leaders develop innovations geared to improving student transition and success. These innovations are grounded in edu-

cational theory. Furthermore, each implemented innovation is closely monitored. Adjustments to innovations are made, where appropriate, by the educators involved in the implementation. Each of these innovations, 18 of which are funded with Cal-PASS and partner dollars, has embedded evaluation to assess the efficacy of the efforts. Data-driven decision making is part of the process from inception to implementation, evaluation and dissemination.

Cal-PASS has been funding innovations for the past 3 years, and many are beginning to bear fruit. For example, the algebra and geometry deconstruction guides are used to select textbooks, train new and existing faculty, and help with scope and sequence. Another innovation sponsored by Cal-PASS involves the mentoring of high school faculty from 9th to 12th grade on a sequential curriculum aligned with postsecondary education. While we cannot say that the successes are due to Cal-PASS, there has been a tremendous increase in test scores among the students who are receiving this revised English curriculum and API scores for this high school have gone up 25 points in the last year alone. In addition, qualitative feedback from students suggests that this curriculum is increas-

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Cal-PASS on the Move!

Some exciting updates:

- ❖ *Cal-PASS Professional Learning Councils were named 1 of 15 Practices with Promise by the Campaign for College (see p. 2 for full story).*
- ❖ *The new Carl Perkins plan has been drafted and reviewed statewide, and Cal-PASS plays a prominent role in the accountability piece required by the new federal regulations.*
- ❖ *Brad Phillips recently made a presentation on Cal-PASS to the Trustee Institute.*
- ❖ *The research department gave a number of presentations at the CAIR and CERA conferences.*

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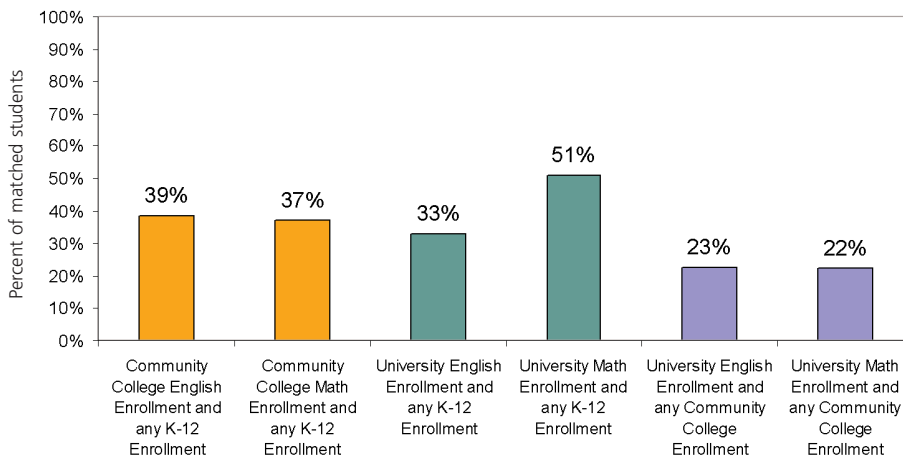
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Spotlight on Data:

Modern Student Pathways

Cal-PASS data have revealed that student transition patterns from K–12 to post-secondary no longer follow traditional pathways. The internal combustion engine, the internet, and the open enrollment policies of community colleges have combined to reshape traditional pathways as students can easily flow between institutions at great distances or attend multiple institutions simultaneously. To capture the complexity of modern student pathways, data sharing partnerships such as Cal-PASS are needed to connect student records and discern patterns of success and struggle. With the availability of course level data in the Cal-PASS database, many pathway questions from faculty center on progression within a discipline between educational segments. In particular, to what extent do students continue taking English or math courses after transitioning to another segment? Does English and math course taking differ between those transitioning between K–12 and community college, K–12 and university, and community college and university?

Percent of students enrolled in a K–12 or community college institution who enrolled in English or math in another educational segment. *Source: Cal-PASS data.*



Using Cal-PASS data, the chart illustrates students who were enrolled in a K–12 institution and showed an English or math course enrollment at a community college or university as well as those who were enrolled at a community college and showed an English or math course enrollment at a university. Note that this chart includes transfers, concurrent enrollments and reverse transfers within the time frame of the Cal-PASS database (1999–2006 for K–12, 1996–2007 for community colleges, and 1997–2007 for universities, although time frames vary by institution).

When matching K–12 and community college enrollments, more than one-third of

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PLCs Receive Accolades

The Cal-PASS Professional Learning Councils (PLCs) recently were named as 1 of 15 “Practices with Promise” by the Campaign for College Opportunity. This well-deserved acknowledgement reflects the incredible work being done by faculty across the state who are participating in Cal-PASS PLCs. Their work in creating instructional conversations and curricula innovations are making a difference for students, and California’s economic future is closely linked to student success. The comment from the Campaign for College Web site below sums up the link between education and state economic stability:

Educators are taking enormous initiative to improve college access and success, according to the report ‘Practices with Promise.’ These programs are making a difference for students today and show promise for the state’s future. As California’s policymakers and education leaders improve educational and economic competitiveness, they may look to the themes and the lessons learned from these working solutions.

(Campaign for College Web site, November 15, 2007)

New Research Staff

Cal-PASS staff recently welcomed Nathan Pellegrin as their newest research analyst. Pellegrin comes to Cal-PASS after many years at the Oakland Unified School District. Marcia Renzullo also joined the team as a research assistant. She was most recently working with EDS and is replacing Linda Tim, who is moving on to become the full-time manager for Eco Design. Thanks to Tim for all of her hard work.



Cal-PASS Joins SSPIRE

Cal-PASS has joined The James Irvine Foundation and MDRC on the Student Support Partnership Integrating Resources and Education (SSPIRE). The SSPIRE Initiative is designed to help community colleges better integrate academic instruction with student support services. Its goal is to improve the persistence, retention and completion rates of 16- to 24-year-old low-income and academically underprepared students. With funding from Irvine, Cal-PASS will work with Derek Price of DVP Praxis to identify the data collection and reporting needs of the SSPIRE schools and ensure the Cal-PASS database is meeting these needs.

This partnership is exciting for several reasons. First, it suits Cal-PASS' mission well. The SSPIRE program outcomes correspond to the desired outcomes of the work to improve articulation across the segments. It also is designed to close the achievement gap for an identified population who are at risk of not completing their community college course work.

Second, the requirements of the

SSPIRE Initiative will fully utilize the Cal-PASS database. The colleges participating in SSPIRE will use the optional fields to track the student support services provided to these students. Cal-PASS will link student support data to academic data, and provide information about how these interact to achieve the SSPIRE Initiative's goals. The potential lessons learned from this connection are great and can inform college support programs nationwide.

Third, Cal-PASS is developing a Web-based template for the SSPIRE schools to access data about their students from the Cal-PASS data system. Funding for this project will come from the Irvine Foundation for this specific piece, as well as from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which funded the original work to create Web-based, point-and-click templates to support access to the Cal-PASS database by member institutions. Cal-PASS is striving to make the data easily accessible and useful, and this will go a long way toward helping that goal be achieved.

From the Executive Director *cont.*

ing their preparedness to succeed at post-secondary education. While not every innovation will prove successful, the key is to have informed conversations using good data about student transitions and success, so that educational leaders can make informed decisions about practice.

Finally, the Cal-PASS model focuses on leveraging the work in one region of the state with efforts around the state. For

example, if one region finds a productive use of the algebra deconstruction guides, then consideration is given to scalability. If appropriate, this work can be scaled not only regionally but across the state. Taking an innovation to scale is the key to making large-scale improvements in student transition and success; data-driven decision making is the key to this effort.

Forty PLCs— and Counting!

Regional collaboration efforts continue to grow and there are now more than 40 Professional Learning Councils (PLCs) across the state representing the following disciplines: math, English, English Learners (EL), science, counseling and career technical education. These discipline-specific councils, made up of local, intersegmental faculty, meet monthly to review data and discuss the challenges of students in their region as they progress from segment to segment.

Cal-PASS is making a concerted effort to bring PLCs to educational institutions located in the northern part of the state. This semester there were successful PLC kickoffs in the Sonoma, Contra Costa and San Mateo areas, and a science council was added to the Placer/Nevada region. Other areas in the north that are actively working to kick off PLCs before the end of the academic year include Humboldt, Stockton, Monterey/San Benito/ Santa Cruz, Alameda, Oakland, San Francisco, Santa Clara and Siskiyou. Several other regions are in the queue for expansion as funding permits for the 2008–2009 fiscal year.

Developing PLCs in the far north, which is dominated by small, rural districts, has posed a challenge both geographically and with regard to data submission. In spite of these challenges, Siskiyou County schools are at the forefront of developing a model to bring Cal-PASS to their institutions. Cal-PASS provided in-person technical support to the K–12 districts in the area to help with the first round of data submission, and there are plans to present intersegmental

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Data Submission: Quick Start Guide

This is a very busy time of year: It seems as soon as trick-or-treaters have finished off the candy, holiday decorations are up. In school district and university IT and research departments, it is Cal-PASS data submission time!

The Cal-PASS data submission for the 2006–2007 academic year opened on November 1 with several changes and a new look. Users now access the site through the new Web portal myCal-PASS. After registering with myCal-PASS, the user's account is activated and data submission begins. Other changes

for this year's submission include an expansion of the collected course information for K–12s and a deeper collection of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) data. The Cal-PASS Validation Program sports a new look and feel, using clearly marked tabs for each of the steps in preparing data, and now checks to be sure the user has the most current version the program. Assistance is available from Cal-PASS staff by contacting websupport@calpass.org. Data are due by the end of December.

Quick Start Guide:

1. Create student, course and award files in the format outlined in the data dictionary. For K–12 Eagle Aeries or SASI Student Information System users, there is a Cal-PASS extract utility within that software to assist you in the creation of the files.
2. Download and install the Cal-PASS Validation program from www.calpass.org/data.
3. Validate the student, course and award files via the Cal-PASS Validation Program (see the Cal-PASS User's Guide for step-by-step instructions).
4. Locate the test results files for STAR and CAHSEE for the district (CDs from the testing vendor ETS or downloaded files) and follow instructions on the "prepare STAR" tab and "prepare CAHSEE" tab in the Cal-PASS Validation Program. (K–12s only).
5. Prepare the transmittal file by selecting the "prepare Transmit file" tab in the Cal-PASS Validation Program.
6. Register as a user on the myCal-PASS portal site at <https://my.calpass.org>.
7. Once your account is approved and activated, you may submit data by selecting the "DATA" tab from the myCal-PASS homepage.

Forty PLCs *cont.*

data to each participating school in spring 2008. Cal-PASS data will be used in this region by an existing P–16 math council to better inform faculty about students' academic behavior as they transition from one educational segment to the next. Intersegmental English data will be shared with existing English councils/departments who already meet regularly to talk about curriculum, students, and improving the teaching and learning process. Support from Siskiyou County school administrators has been seminal in bringing Cal-PASS to the far north. Cal-PASS has learned a lot from this region and looks forward to applying that knowledge to other regional expansions of data sharing consortia and PLC development.

As noted above, support is crucial. The 15 Cal-PASS regional coordinators who serve as liaisons and representatives for the existing 40 councils are a diverse group of experienced educators who help develop and maintain the PLCs by using their expertise in education, group dynamics and research. Their bios are posted on the Cal-PASS Web site, as is information regarding the exciting innovations PLC participants have developed (www.calpass.org). Many of these innovations were featured in presentations at the Strengthening Student Success conference held in San Jose this past October. The presentations will be available on-line shortly and a link to them will be posted on the Cal-PASS Web site when it becomes available.



Spotlight on Data *cont.*

K–12 students enrolled in English or math at a community college. Another way of looking at this is that two-thirds of students who enrolled in a community college directly from K–12 did not take an English or math course at a community college. Given that most community college enrollments occurred after the K–12 enrollment, this lack of English and math course taking may be due to delays in taking these courses after transition, students not intending to take English or math at the community college, or other reasons.

Between K–12 and the university segment, students were much more likely to take math than English within the time frame of the data. It may be that more K–12 students fulfilled their university English requirement than completed their math requirement prior to university enrollment, or that more students elected to take math than English at the university, or that more students had declared majors that had an additional math requirement.

Fewer than one in four community college students showed English or math enrollments at the university. It could be that the majority of students completed their English or math at the community college and did not need further English or math to complete their university degree requirements.

While these match rates may change as new participants join, it seems that many students may not be taking the foundational disciplines of English or math at multiple segments. This raises a new question of how well the English and math in one segment prepares students for success in other disciplines such as history or physics at another segment. Some of this interdisciplinary research has already occurred (see winter 2007 *Cal-PASS Transitions*) and will continue as the Cal-PASS research department continues to work with faculty to explore the intricate pathways our students traverse.

English Collaboration Across Segments



Micah Jendian (co-chair of the San Diego East County English PLC) meets with some of the PLC faculty members to discuss the findings of the group's innovations and the direction for the PLC's work next semester.

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