

## **Introduction to the 2010 ARCC Report**

### **Background**

This report on a set of performance indicators for the California Community Colleges (CCC) meets a legislative requirement that resulted from Assembly Bill 1417 (Pacheco, Statutes of 2004, Chapter 581). The details of the legislation appear in Appendix F of this report. For clarity's sake, we have named this reporting system *Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges* (or ARCC). The report itself has the title of "Focus On Results." As required by the Legislature, the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) will produce this report each year and disseminate it so that each college will share the report with its local board of trustees. The Chancellor's Office will also make the report available to state government policymakers and the public at large.

The report's objectives are to make policymakers, local college officials, and elected boards aware of system and college performance in specific areas of effort and to inform the public about overall system performance. Readers will observe that the 2010 report continues to cover noncredit courses as required by Senate Bill 361 (Scott, Statutes of 2006, Chapter 631). Again, this coverage of noncredit outcomes only extends across courses designated as part of the "Enhanced Noncredit" funding. For clarity, this report refers to this group of noncredit courses as CDCP (an acronym for the objective known as Career Development and College Preparation). Readers who want additional details on CDCP performance should refer to a supplemental report that the ARCC staff produce as a follow-up to *Focus On Results*. The CCCCCO will issue this supplemental report after it has released *Focus On Results* because of scheduling and resource limitations.

*Focus On Results* drew upon the contributions of many parties. The framework for ARCC used the expertise of a team of researchers from the Research and Planning Group for the California Community Colleges (i.e., the RP Group), a panel of nationally recognized researchers on college performance, a statewide technical advisory workgroup, and staff at the Chancellor's Office. In Appendix H we list the individuals who played important roles in producing the 2010 ARCC Report.

### **How to Use This Report**

We acknowledge that a variety of people will see this report, and we recognize that individuals will differ widely in their reading objectives and in their familiarity with the report's topic. With this in mind, we have tried to design the report so that policy makers at both the state and local levels will have a clear presentation of essential performance indicators for the system and for each community college within it. The body of the report emphasizes tables of summary data that provide snapshots of system and college level performance. Readers should read the brief introductions to each of these sections (system and college level) to understand their contents. These introductions cover the framework for ARCC, and they should help most readers to understand the performance indicators cited in this report. Appendix E, which presents a short list of terms and abbreviations, may also help the general reader.

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We recognize that researchers, analysts, and college officials will require documentation of the methodology for the performance indicators in this report. Such technical details appear in three of the appendices. Appendix B (methods for calculating the indicators), Appendix C (regression analyses for the peer grouping), and Appendix D (cluster analyses for the peer grouping) specifically address methodological issues, and they tend to require technical knowledge on the part of the reader.

The report's first section covers the system's overall performance over time, and this will help readers to see the broad context of the system's performance. The section that follows system performance presents specific information for each college. The first two pages of college-level tables display how that college performed over time on eight basic indicators. The year-to-year figures for these performance indicators should give readers a good idea of how any given college has done during the past few years, especially in terms of its progress in areas that are generally recognized as critical in community colleges.

The third and fourth pages for each college display basic demographic data for the college's enrollment. This information will help readers understand the student population served by that college. For many readers, such information can indicate relevant aspects of a college's effectiveness (i.e., who does the college serve?), plus it can provide additional context for the reported performance indicators.

The fifth page for each college shows the "peer grouping" information for the college. On this page, readers will find a comparison of a college's performance on each of the seven indicators that have adequate data for peer grouping. For each of these seven performance indicators, we have performed a statistical analysis (peer grouping) to identify other California Community Colleges that most closely resemble the college in terms of environmental factors that have linkage to (or association with) the performance indicator. Interested readers should refer to Appendix A to see the names of the colleges that comprise each peer group. We emphasize that the peer group results are rough guides for evaluating college level performance because each college may have unique local factors that we could not analyze statistically for the peer group identification. Because year-to-year stability in peer grouping facilitates local planning and analysis, the 2010 peer groups will remain the same as they were in the 2009 ARCC report. Also, this report will continue to omit from peer grouping the indicator for Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP, or Enhanced Noncredit) courses because the data for CDCP are still under development.

The sixth page for a college shows that college's own self-assessment. This brief statement from the college administration may note, among other things, unique factors that our statistical analysis may have missed. The self-assessment is important because it may help to explain the performance figures for a college. The ARCC staff members in

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the Chancellor's Office do not edit these self-assessments from the college administrators, and the only requirement for the content is that it stay within a 500-word limit. Because the word limit forces the self-assessment to focus upon a few basic points, some readers may wish to follow-up with a college that may have other analyses or data that it could not include in the ARCC's brief self-assessment.

The best use of the ARCC Report will require the integration of information from various parts of the report. Judgments about the performance of any particular college should especially pay attention to the sections on year-to-year performance, peer group comparison, enrollment demographics, and the college self-assessment. A focus upon only one of these pieces of information will probably provide an incomplete evaluation of college performance, and this may lead one to make unfair judgments about an institution. Consequently, we hope that users of this report will maintain this multi-dimensional viewpoint (from the different report sections) as they draw their conclusions or as they communicate about the report to other people.

The 2010 report will contain numerous changes to past data as well as new data for the most recent academic year. For this reason, analysts should rely primarily upon the 2010 report instead of data from prior ARCC reports. The Chancellor's Office MIS (Management Information System) unit has continued to implement various data improvements that are virtually impossible to complete within a narrow time frame.

Additional information about ARCC is available at the following website:

<http://www.cccco.edu/OurAgency/TechResearchInfo/ResearchandPlanning/ARCC/tabid/292/Default.aspx>

If you have any questions or comments about the report, please e-mail them to:

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