BMCC Trends

Student Enrollment

1. **Consistent with the nationwide decrease in enrollment of older community college students,** at BMCC, students are getting younger. BMCC’s age distribution is shifting, with the decline particularly among students 30 and older, where since fall 2010 the age distribution of those students has decreased by 5 percentage points.²

2. **New York City high school graduation rates are up significantly, which may impact BMCC’s future enrollment.** BMCC may see more and more public high school graduates enter as first-time freshmen in coming years. While for the last 5 years between about 60-70% of BMCC’s first-time freshmen have consistently come from New York City public schools, New York City’s graduation rate has jumped up about 22 percentage points over the past decade, from 46.5% in 2005 to 68.4% for the class of 2014.³ This trend of increasing public high school graduates is a factor to consider as we set future enrollment targets.

3. **BMCC students come from all over New York City, most from boroughs beyond Manhattan.** BMCC’s accessibility via public transportation helps make it the school of choice for many New Yorkers. In fall 2014 almost one third of our students resided in Brooklyn, with a little over 20% living in the Bronx and about 20% living in Queens. Just under 20% reside in Manhattan.⁴ Students come from more than 110 high schools, with no clear top “feeder” schools, and no one high school contributing to more than 2% or 3% of our enrollment.⁵

4. **While enrollment at other community colleges has gone down, BMCC’s enrollment continues to grow.** Between fall 2012 and fall 2014, community college enrollment nationally declined by about 3% each year.⁶ During that same period, BMCC’s fall-to-fall headcount enrollment climbed from 24,537 to 26,606, representing an 8.4% increase.⁷ This increase builds on a decade-long trend, where BMCC’s enrollment has increased by nearly 42% (from 18,776 in fall 2005).⁸ BMCC’s operational challenge isn’t managing a declining enrollment, but for continued growth. Most pressing is the need to upgrade our facilities and manage with limited space. Having adequate faculty and staff to meet student needs also becomes complicated. For example, even though we recently hired 60 new full-time faculty, we’ve been unable to improve the ratio of full-time faculty-to-student FTEs.

5. **More and more students are enrolling at BMCC in summer and winter.** BMCC’s summer enrollment has increased dramatically over the last decade, with the most rapid growth occurring

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² BMCC – Fact Sheets Fall 2010 to Fall 2015.
⁴ BMCC – Fact Sheet Fall 2014.
⁸ Comparison of BMCC – Fact Sheet Fall 2014 data with BMCC 2004-2005 Fact Book data.
between fall 2012 and fall 2014, where headcounts grew by more than 25% (from 5,420 to 6,859 students).\(^9\) Winter enrollment between fall 2012 and fall 2014 increased by 185% (from 782 to 2,231 students).\(^10\) These changing enrollment patterns come as welcome news: we have offered tuition waivers during these times and eliminated all restrictions on enrollment in immersion offerings during the summer. BMCC has created incentives for more students to enroll in summer and winter and students are responding.

6. **Upon entry, about 80% of BMCC students are consistently not academically ready for college-level study.** Like community colleges across the country, many BMCC students face a steep college readiness curve when they arrive on campus. Estimates of the numbers of students taking a remedial or developmental course when they enter a community college vary widely, however one thing is clear at BMCC: the need for developmental learning among our entering students is extremely high. Indeed, 13\% of first-time freshmen fail to demonstrate the skills they need to succeed in college on all three basic skills fronts – reading, writing, and math – and consistently almost 80\% of first-time freshmen require developmental math.\(^11\) Since almost all of our students require developmental education, we know the needle on student success cannot be moved unless we address this persistent challenge head on.

**Student Satisfaction**

7. **BMCC students report that the college could be more responsive to their needs and provide more guidance as it pertains to their academic and career goals.** A review of results from both the 2013 and 2015 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) survey reveals that students do not feel they are getting the guidance they need to meet their educational and career goals. Of the top 11 institutional challenges listed in the 2015 Noel-Levitz SSI survey, which basically summarize those indicators that students said where of high importance but with which they also reported low satisfaction, at least half of the challenges related directly to advisement. In that 2015 survey, about half of students reported dissatisfaction with guidance and support toward their career goals. About half also reported dissatisfaction with various student support services, like financial aid.\(^12\) Students have shared similar views in their responses to the CUNY Student Satisfaction Survey (SES) in recent years. In fact, comparative analyses of CUNY SES results in 2012 and 2014 show growing levels of student dissatisfaction with academic advising, as well as with key student supports, such as career planning and placement services.\(^13\)

8. **BMCC students report that existing communications methods need improvements. Many students are unaware of what supports exist.** A similar comparative review of results from the 2013 and 2015 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) survey reveals that communications with students remains a persistent challenge. In the 2015 Noel-Levitz SSI survey, about 50\% of students feel they are not being notified early enough in the semester about how they are doing academically. About 50\% also reported that they are not satisfied with telephone

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\(^9\) BMCC Enrollment, Retention and Completion Report, 2015, p. 2.
\(^10\) BMCC Enrollment, Retention and Completion Report, 2015, p. 2.
\(^12\) Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) reports, 2013 and 2015.
\(^13\) CUNY Student Experience Survey (SES) reports, 2012 and 2014.
and hotline supports, nor do they feel they are aware of the full range of campus services, activities, and opportunities that are available.\textsuperscript{14} A review of CUNY SES results from 2012 and 2014 supports these findings, especially when it comes to communications about student academic status. Indeed, the percentage of students reporting that BMCC does not clearly communicate degree requirements increased in 2014.\textsuperscript{15}

**Student Progress to Degree and Transfer**

9. **Student progress in reading, writing, and math, after taking BMCC developmental courses, needs improvement.** Consistently, the percentage of students who have demonstrated college level proficiency in reading, writing, and math after taking a developmental course sequence is low. Only about one-third successfully demonstrate math proficiency after taking developmental coursework, and just over 50% are reading and writing proficient after developmental coursework.\textsuperscript{16} We’ve experienced improved outcomes in some new math courses, where combining developmental with college level math skills has improved course pass rates.\textsuperscript{17} This promising data helps build the case for streamlining course sequences across developmental courses.

10. **The DFW rates in BMCC Gateway courses are too high.** Colleges nationally are struggling with their Gateway courses. Studies have shown that gateway courses “can be a roadblock for the vast majority of all students – regardless of race, age, or income.”\textsuperscript{18} At BMCC, DFW rates in our Top 20 Courses by Enrollment – all Gateway courses – fell between a 19% DFW and a 62% DFW in Fall 2014, with the 7 courses that enrolled 2,000 plus students in Fall 2014 having a 25%-62% DFW rate.

11. **First-year retention remains a persistent challenge, affected by a number of factors.** Like other community colleges, many students drop out before they reach their second year. At BMCC, on average, 36% of BMCC first-time freshmen leave after one year.\textsuperscript{19} We’ve identified some key factors that seem to affect attrition and retention rates for new freshmen. As stated in a recent BMCC retention report, “underrepresented minority males, triple remedial or double remedial (with one of those being math) students, remedial students who earn fewer than 5 credits within their first year, college-ready students who earn between 5 and 12 credits in their first year, and new freshmen between the ages of 19 and 22 all have higher than average rates of leaving the CUNY system prior to graduation.”\textsuperscript{20}

12. **Credit accumulation is a major factor affecting retention and graduation.** According to a recent BMCC momentum study, earning at least 27 credits within the first two years (that is, reaching “sophomore status”) is the most predictive factor of graduation within 4 years. The odds of 4-year graduation are about 10 times higher for these students compared to those who earn fewer

\textsuperscript{14} Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) reports, 2013 and 2015.
\textsuperscript{15} CUNY Student Experience Survey (SES) reports, 2012 and 2014.
\textsuperscript{16} BMCC Enrollment, Retention and Completion Report, 2015, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{17} BMCC data for Teagle grant. (2013). Findings for Mat 14, Mat 41, and Mat 150.5.
credits in that timeframe.\textsuperscript{21} The same holds true for the 3-year graduation rate. Predictive analyses show the following 3-year graduation odds for students achieving sophomore status: 14 times greater for developmental students; 12 times greater for ESL students, and 23 times greater for college ready students\textsuperscript{22} On average, first-time, full-time students are accumulating only about 15-16 credits, and part-time students are earning only about 11-12 credits during their first year at BMCC. Then while full-time students have, on average, accumulated about 32-35 credits by the end of year 2, part-time students, who constitute about a third of BMCC’s student body, have only accumulated about 22-25 credits during that two-year time period.

13. While BMCC has been recognized as high ranking in awarding degrees in some majors (e.g., business administration and criminal justice) and for some students (e.g., African-Americans),\textsuperscript{23} its 3-year graduation is consistently too low. BMCC’s first-time, full-time 3-year graduation rates have hovered between 15% and 16% in recent years. First-time, full-time students requiring developmental assistance have consistently fared worse, with 3-year graduation rates ranging between 11.8% and 14.6%.\textsuperscript{24} Closer examination of all freshmen shows that developmental and ESL groups graduate at significantly lower rates than college ready freshmen. The 3-year graduation rate for all developmental and ESL freshmen is 11% as compared to 20% for college ready students. Even after 4 years, the 4-year graduation rate for all developmental and ESL freshmen is 18% versus 26% for college ready students.\textsuperscript{25}

14. Sustained, intrusive interventions improve student outcomes, especially when activities are mandated. There’s promising national data, with supporting evidence from CUNY and BMCC, that high impact practices accelerate credit accumulation, improve retention, and increase graduation rates. Using nationwide data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has been able to establish that some practices, such as first-year seminars, learning communities, and writing intensive courses, can be implemented as a set of effective tools to collectively impact student success and learning. They have found that underrepresented students (minority, first-generation, transfer, and low-income) particularly benefit from these approaches.\textsuperscript{26} BMCC has in place a number of these high impact “tools,” and CUNY and BMCC assessments show that these approaches are working. Six prime examples:

a. A CUNY 2013 study found that CUNYStart has a positive impact on development skills acquisition and then even student credit accumulation, GPA status, and retention once students are enrolled in a degree program.\textsuperscript{27} CUNY’s Office of Research, Evaluation, and Program Support (REPS) has recently partnered with MDRC and the Community College

\textsuperscript{22} BMCC Momentum Study. (2014 Sept), p. 10.
\textsuperscript{23} BMCC website http://www.cuny.edu/about/colleges/bmcc.html
\textsuperscript{24} BMCC Enrollment, Retention and Completion Report, 2015, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{25} BMCC Enrollment, Retention and Completion Report, 2015, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{27} CUNY Start offers students an intensive, low-cost alternative to traditional remedial requirements at CUNY based on students’ scores on the CUNY Assessment Tests (CAT) in reading, writing, and math. CUNY Start students, basically those with low basic skills, temporarily delay the start of their degree program studies to participate in a semester-long program. For more information on assessment of CUNYStart see CUNYStart: Analysis of Student Outcomes (2013 Nov). Office of Academic Affairs, CUNY.
Research Center to conduct an external evaluation of CUNYStart, to deepen the evidence base for this intervention. MDRC and CCRC are studying the effects of CUNY Start on students’ academic outcomes, how these effects vary by population and context, how the program is implemented, and how much the program costs.

b. **A 2013 assessment found that CUNY’s University Summer Immersion Program (USIP) has a positive impact on student outcomes, particularly credit earning and retention.** Compared to a group of control students, USIP appears to: buttress retention into the second year by about six percentage points; increase the proportion of credits earned by about five percentage points, boost non-remedial credit attainment by about 1 credit per semester in the second year, and raise overall credits earned in the first three semesters by the equivalent of an entire course (3 credits). These benefits indicate that USIP boosts early momentum both by preventing stop-out and by removing barriers to taking credit-bearing courses. USIP also has somewhat larger effects for students who have lower tested academic ability. Among students who scored lower on the COMPASS math test, USIP takers and non-takers diverged in terms of retention into year two (7 percentage points), credits earned through Fall 2011 (3.5 credits) and credits attempted by Spring 2012 (4.5 credits). Overall, especially for those students with poorer academic ability, the magnitude of these effects seems to grow over time.²⁸

c. **A 2014 study found that students who enrolled in BMCC’s Quantway (MAT041) fared significantly better than students who enrolled in Elementary Algebra (MAT051) on a number of fronts, including that they had a higher average cumulative GPA and total credits accumulated.²⁹**

d. **Recent analyses of the Out In Two program has also found that participating students achieved greater levels of completion and faster graduation and credit accumulation compared to similarly qualified students who did not participate in the program, even after controlling for the credits earned prior to joining the program and the higher initial GPA among students in the Out In Two group.³⁰**

e. **Analyses of the pilot implementation of BMCC’s Freshmen Learning Academies (FLA) showed measurable student outcomes, particularly in pass rates and self-reported frequency of critical reading, writing, and success behaviors. Analyses also showed that improvements didn’t stick when activities were no longer mandated.** One semester of participation in the FLA Program resulted in measurable outcome differences, particularly in pass rates and self-reported frequency of critical reading, writing and success behaviors. When compared to the Non-FLA students, the FLA group was more likely to show significant growth in the frequency of these behaviors over time. After a propensity score matched comparison sample was obtained, the core course pass rates were significantly higher for the FLA participants when compared to the matched Non-FLA participants. When students were

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²⁸ CUNY’s University Summer Immersion Program (USIP) offers incoming CUNY students the opportunity to take required remedial courses before beginning regular coursework in their first year of college. The program aims to boost academic outcomes for students who have been placed in at least one remedial sequence. For more information on assessment of USIP see Attewell, P., Isserles, R., and Jang, S. (2013 Mar). Getting a Jump on the Degree: The Effects of USIP for Community College Students. Academic Momentum Project, CUNY.

²⁹ Quantway is an innovative remedial math course that is designed to prepare students for college-level math using a student-based pedagogy that encourages students to struggle with real-world problems that need mathematics rather than memorizing procedures for solving algebraic equations. Quantway was created in 2010 in partnership with the Carnegie Foundation. For assessment information about Quantway see Report: Quantway Evaluation. (2014 Aug). BMCC.

³⁰ BMCC’s Out in Two is an academic program designed to help students graduate within two consecutive years. For more assessment information about Out in Two see Report: Out In 2 (2015 Jan). BMCC.
asked to reveal their level of agreement with statements regarding social integration, the FLA students were more likely to indicate at the end of the semester that they now had a fellow student, a faculty person, or a staff member to whom to turn with questions, when compared to the non-FLA students.31

f. MDRC’s 2015 study found that CUNY ASAP participants substantially improved students’ academic outcomes over three years, substantially increasing full-time enrollment, accelerating credit accumulation, and almost doubling the rate of graduating with an associate’s degree. ASAP increased enrollment in college and had especially large effects during the winter and summer intersessions. On average, ASAP program group students earned 48 credits in three years, 9 credits more than did control group students. By the end of the study period, 40 percent of the ASAP program group had received a degree, compared with 22 percent of the control group. At that point, 25 percent of the ASAP program group was enrolled in a four-year school, compared with 17 percent of the control group.32

15. CUNY AA and AS graduates who transfer earn their bachelor’s degrees at higher rates. At BMCC, we have found that over 65% of graduates transfer to a baccalaureate program within a year.33 A 2012 CUNY study found that “earning an AA or AS degree -- holding constant the number of credits earned – is associated with a 6.9% increase in the probability of attaining a baccalaureate degree, an effect similar in magnitude to the average effect of an additional semester of full-time coursework.”34 Additional analyses of what happens when BMCC students continue at Baruch, the four-year CUNY college where most BMCC students transfer, corroborates these findings. Earning an associate’s degree before leaving BMCC has a positive effect on 4- and 6-year graduation rates for BMCC graduates once they are at Baruch.35

16. The majority of students who leave BMCC leave college altogether. Analyses of 4-year outcomes of our fall 2010 first-time freshmen cohort revealed that 20% graduated from BMCC, 11% were still enrolled at BMCC, 15% transferred without graduating, and 54% were “unknown,” meaning they dropped out of college. Of the 1,044 students of that cohort who earned a degree at BMCC, 62% transferred to CUNY BA/BS programs, 1% transferred to CUNY AA/AS programs, and 3% transferred to colleges outside of CUNY. Of the 754 of BMCC students who transferred without graduating, 7% transferred to CUNY BA/BS programs, 4% transferred to CUNY AA/AS programs, and 10% transferred to non-CUNY colleges.36

31 BMCC’s Freshman Learning Academies (FLA) uses a Paired Learning Communities structure – one of the high-impact strategies identified in the community college student success literature. The BMCC FLA Paired Learning Communities structure created teams of instructors and paired developmental or introductory English courses with entry level courses from the social sciences. For assessment information about SLA see BMCC FLA Program Evaluation, Fall 2012 Pilot Semester (2013 January).

32 ASAP is designed to help students earn their Associate degree as quickly as possible, with a goal of graduating at least 50% of students within three years or less. ASAP at BMCC emphasizes enriched academic, financial and personal supports including comprehensive and personalized advisement, career counseling, tutoring, tuition waivers, MTA MetroCards and additional financial assistance to defray the cost of textbooks. For more information about this evaluation of ASAP see Scrivener, Susan et al. (2015 Feb). Doubling Graduation Rates. Three-Year Effects of CUNY’s Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) for Developmental Education Students. MDRC.


36 BMCC Enrollment, Retention and Completion Report, 2015, p. 20.
17. **Transfer before graduation should become part of how we measure student success.** If we take into account those who transfer to CUNY 4-year college before earning a degree from BMCC, our combined three-year graduation/transfer out rate for the fall 2008-2011 student cohorts was between 18% and 22%. Bottom line, adding those who transfer before earning a BMCC degree to our graduation rate increases our overall “student success” rate by 5-6% percentage points. Adding those who transfer before earning a BMCC degree to our graduation rate for students not requiring developmental education increases our success rate even more – by 11-13%. While helping BMCC students successfully graduate remains our priority, we should ensure we’re responsive to the needs of students who transfer sooner. And successful transfer before graduation should be factored into how we calculate student success.

Financial Support and Economic Climate

18. **Major funding sources will no longer be available. This potentially limits future growth of student supports.** CUNY Compact funding and other sources of CUNY special allocation have funded key student services at BMCC for a number of years. Compact funding, an annual source of between $4-8 million, terminates June 2016 for all CUNY colleges. BMCC has committed to supporting existing staff positions, but, without Compact funding, BMCC must determine how to grow support services and hire more people to meet increased demand from students with less funding. This is especially challenging since students already report that more staff are needed in key areas, like advisement.

19. **BMCC needs more space but the downtown real estate market is not primed to meet our needs.** BMCC’s campus is located in one of the richest communities in America. To provide a first class teaching and learning environment to a growing student population, the college needs more space. However, the existing real estate market is not amenable to long-term leases and more limited for non-residential space use. BMCC is currently in the process of developing a Master Plan, which will outline our facilities needs for the next ten years. However, even once approved by CUNY, the lower Manhattan marketplace, which BMCC finds itself in, presents hurdles that the college will need to overcome.

20. **Social mobility has stagnated nationally – a trend that is particularly pronounced in New York City.** The gap between skills and opportunity is widening in the U.S. Perhaps nowhere is this fact more evident than here in New York City. According to Career Pathways, a recent New York City Mayor’s Office report, median weekly earnings for a person in NYC with less than a high school diploma is about $472 versus $1,714 for someone with a professional degree. Changing one’s social status is nearly impossible with wages really only increasing for those at the top. According to that report, since the Great Recession, “wage gains have accrued only at the high end and compensation in low skill jobs has actually decreased in real terms.” The probability that poorer individuals can reach our American Dream, lifting themselves out of poverty with true grit and

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37 BMCC analyses of 3-Year Graduation Rates and Transfer Outs for First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen, Fall Cohorts 2008-2011.
determination, is diminishing. Sadly, across the country today, a child born poor is more likely to remain poor than at any other point in our nation’s history.40

Economic and Workforce Development

21. The labor market now demands more education and skills. While in 1973, people with a high school education or less made up 72% of the U.S. workforce and 60% of high school graduates earned a middle class wage, today those with a high school education account for only about 41% of the workforce and earn far less than those with some college. The difference in lifetime earnings for a person with a high school education and those with a college degree is estimated at about $1 million.41 According to New York City’s Career Pathways report, “[g]iven that employers are increasingly using educational attainment as a proxy for skill level when making hiring decisions, education has become the single most important determinant of employability and earning power. National research similarly shows that at every level of educational attainment from high school completion through professional degree, the unemployment rate decreases and average weekly earnings rise.”42 It’s not just about having a degree. According to employers, what also makes the difference in hiring and career success are skills like oral and written communication, professionalism, and critical thinking.43

22. NYC is shifting its workforce development focus to more emphasis on training. According Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City is making an, “unprecedented full-system shift toward a Career Pathways model and public-private Industry Partnership initiatives to ensure that workforce training is directly linked to employers’ talent needs.”44 In essence, this shift moves the City away from overemphasis on job placement and more toward skills building that can advance careers and increase earnings. It is designed to strengthen mobility, especially for lower wage workers (the more than 1 million New Yorkers in low-wage jobs), while also providing key growth industries with the talent pool they will need to thrive.45

23. BMCC needs to become more proactive in aligning programs with sector development in lower Manhattan, such as the emergence of the TAMI sector. The Alliance for Downtown New York publishes data on business trends affecting lower Manhattan. According to one of its 2014 reports, there’s a new sector the city is calling Technology, Advertising, Media, and Information (TAMI). As the report states, “New York City’s digital ecosystem is a pillar of the city’s economy, generating more than half a million jobs, more than $50 billion in annual compensation, almost $125 billion in annual output and $5.6 billion in tax revenues.”46 While TAMI has emerged as a fast growing sector in NYC overall, it’s really taking off in lower Manhattan. Between 2007 and 2010 Lower Manhattan represented about 14% of Manhattan’s TAMI leasing; that percentage
grew to 32% between 2011 and 2014. Today many TAMI companies are making lower Manhattan their home, as now more than 800 TAMI companies have offices south of Chambers Street. This has contributed to the 71% increase in jobs in lower Manhattan between 2010 and 2014, from 16,864 to 28,864. BMCC could do more to ensure its future degree and certificate offerings are tuned in to these emerging business trends within the lower Manhattan community.

24. BMCC now has access to Department of Labor data that can inform the direction of future degree program and certificate development. A CUNY agreement with the NY State Department of Labor resulted in each CUNY college gaining access to employment/earnings data on its graduates. BMCC published its first report based on this data in 2015. One major headline from that report: almost one quarter of BMCC’s 2013 graduates were employed in health care and social assistance, with 17% employed in public administration. Having access to this DOL data deepens BMCC capacity to assess how well its offerings position students for the employment marketplace.

25. BMCC has a role to play in helping students and New York City remain competitive in our global marketplace. In 2012, a CUNY task force produced a detailed report of five major sectors of strategic importance to New York City’s economy — finance, insurance, and accounting; health care; higher education; information technology; and media and advertising. This report examined “key drivers and emerging trends in these industries, the workforce skills in demand, and employers’ recommendations to colleges and universities to enhance students’ preparation for a competitive workplace.” Using data such as this to inform our program offerings benefits our students and positions BMCC as a resource in workforce development that maintains our city’s international competitive edge.

Higher Education Landscape

26. Community colleges remain the most accessible pathway to U.S. higher education, especially for underrepresented groups. Community colleges represent the largest and fastest-growing sector of U.S. higher education, enrolling nearly half of all U.S. undergraduates. They enroll 36% of first-generation college students, as well as 57% of Hispanic, 52% of Black, 43% of Asian/Pacific Islander, and 61% of Native American undergraduates. Especially as college tuition continues to rise, community colleges offer the affordability and flexibility many students need to meet their educational and career goals. Comparative analyses of tuition at private versus public college options in lower Manhattan makes this very real. Pace University’s 2015-16 full-time tuition for a New York resident is $39,728 (not including about $20,000 more for room and board and standard fees). BMCC’s 2015-16 full-time tuition for NYC residents is $4,800.

47 Who is TAMI, p. 4.
48 Who is TAMI, p. 3.
49 Who is TAMI, p. 5.
27. **Community colleges are now a destination, not just a point of departure into higher education.** The National Student Clearinghouse recently released a report that found “community colleges are now a destination — and not merely a departure point — for students who transfer from one institution to another.”\(^{55}\) According to this National Student Clearinghouse report, “Two-year public institutions were the most frequent transfer destination for students starting at all types of institutions but one, even four-year institutions. Roughly half of all students who transferred from a four-year institution made a reverse-transfer by moving to a two-year institution. The single exception was for students who started at public two-year institutions and, even there, 38 percent of those who transferred simply moved to another two-year public.”\(^{56}\) This suggests that today’s students are seeking something in community colleges that their four-year counterparts cannot provide.

28. **Student enrollment patterns are shifting nationally, with more students transferring, sometimes more than once and across state boundaries.** The National Student Clearinghouse also found that among students who transfer, 25% transfer more than once and 27% transfer across state lines.\(^{57}\) This demonstrates the need for a comprehensive view of student transfer and mobility to inform education policymaking and institutional improvement efforts.

29. **Retention increases when students are more engaged.** The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is conducted annually to help community colleges assess their educational practices so they can improve student outcomes. CCSSE has identified five benchmarks for effective educational practice in community colleges, all of which center around the idea that “the more actively engaged students are – with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter – the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals.”\(^{58}\) The five benchmarks are: active and collaborative learning, student effort (“time on task”), academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners.\(^{59}\) Many of these benchmarks are those that characterize the high impact practices identified by AAC&U and that CUNY and BMCC have incorporated into key programs.

30. **Being able to demonstrate evidence of outcomes is now required.** We’re in the midst of a several decades long movement to improve post-secondary student success. The passage of the Student Right-to-Know (SRK) and Campus Security Act of 1990, represented what some might consider a first step in that direction: U.S. colleges were required to provide data to the U.S. Department of Education, such as on graduation rates, in order for their students to be eligible for federal financial aid.\(^{60}\) While it took years to define graduation rates – something that’s still

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\(^{55}\) Abdul-Alim, J. (2015 July). Study: Community Colleges a Destination. Published in Diverse Issues in Higher Education. This posting reviews Transfer & Mobility: A National View of Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2008 Cohort. (Feb 2012). National Student Clearinghouse and the Project on Academic Success at Indiana University.

\(^{56}\) Transfer and Mobility, p. 7.

\(^{57}\) Transfer and Mobility, p. 5.

\(^{58}\) McClenny, K., Marti, C., and Adkins, C. Student Engagement and Student Outcomes: Key Findings from CCSSE Validation Research. Community College Leadership Program. The University of Texas at Austin, p. 1. Posted at https://www.ccsse.org/aboutsurvey/docs/CCSSE%20Validation%20Summary.pdf

\(^{59}\) Student Engagement and Student Outcomes: Key Findings From CCSSE Validation Research, pgs. 4-5.

hotly debated, especially among community colleges – it has taken even longer to require that colleges publish graduation and other outcomes data.\textsuperscript{61} Since the Spellings Commission shined a spotlight on the problems with our U.S. postsecondary education system and how too many students don’t successfully make it through,\textsuperscript{62} higher education funders and accrediting bodies have turned up the heat on colleges nationwide, demanding greater evidence that they monitor and make progress on student and institutional outcomes.\textsuperscript{63} Indeed, BMCC’s own accrediting body recently changed its standards so that now all accredited institutions must demonstrate how data informs all aspects of decision-making, from what happens operationally to what is taught within the classroom.\textsuperscript{64}

31. **National attention on postsecondary education completion has increased, with many new approaches being tested.** The latest reform movement in higher education has largely focused on how to help students complete college with either a degree or a certificate in a timely manner. Many promising practices on how to best do so are being tested nationwide, from guided pathways (a comprehensive approach through which students follow structured academic paths), to retooling advising, rethinking developmental education, and improving transfer and partnerships with high schools and 4-year colleges, and introducing more work-based learning.\textsuperscript{65} Technology is a tool that many are considering as they seek to improve student outcomes. While not to be regarded as a silver bullet, rapidly changing technologies are transforming instruction, the way in which colleges communicate with students and offer academic supports, and the administrative systems that underlie their operations.

**Other Sources reviewed but not cited:**


\textsuperscript{61} Redesigning America’s Community Colleges, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{63} Redesigning America’s Community Colleges, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{64} Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation (2015). Thirteenth Edition. Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
\textsuperscript{65} Sources describing innovations include: Four Year Myth: Make College More Affordable, Restore the Promise of Graduating on Time. (2014). Complete College America; Redesigning America’s Community Colleges; and Pathways to Prosperity.