

# Achieving the Dream

## Annual Narrative & Financial Report: April 2010

**Name of Institution:** Pulaski Technical College

**Submission Date:** April 30, 2010

**Achieving the Dream Funder (if applicable):** Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

**Grant Number (if applicable):**

**Applying for Leader College Status:** \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_x\_\_\_ No

**Name and E-mail of Contact Person Regarding this Report:** Melissa Hendricks,  
Grants and Major Gifts Officer, mhendricks@pulaskitech.edu

---

### Section 1: Implementing the ATD Model of Institutional Improvement

#### Committed Leadership

**1. Briefly describe how the president, chancellor, and/or campus CEO participated in your ATD work this year.**

Dr. Dan F. Bakke, Pulaski Technical College President, identified Augusta Farver, Dean of the Division of Business, as the leader to provide structure and guide Achieving the Dream activities this academic year. Dr. Bakke and Mr. Farver addressed all faculty and staff who attended the Fall Convocation banquet marking the commencement of the fall 2009 semester. Their messages focused on the importance of Achieving the Dream and all student success initiatives. Dr. Bakke served as a host for Pulaski Tech's community focus groups. Dr. Bakke and Purnell Henderson, Vice President for Instruction, attended the 2010 Achieving the Dream Strategy Institute in Charlotte, N.C. Mr. Henderson has added an update on student success initiatives as a regular agenda item for the Instructional Leadership Team, which meets twice a month. Dr. Bakke also periodically updates the College's Board of Trustees on student success initiatives, including Achieving the Dream.

Dr. Bakke encouraged his cabinet and administrative leadership team to group all student success initiatives under that moniker, reducing the likelihood of "silo" behavior for Achieving the Dream, Network for Student Success (black male initiative), TRiO, Veterans Upward Bound, Career Pathways or other programs. At his suggestion, the Public Relations and Marketing office designed a handout titled "Student Success Initiatives" that was used to inform students of all student support programs during advising sessions. He has also charged the Marketing and Public Relations staff with developing a plan to communicate student success initiatives and Achieving the Dream activities more effectively to faculty, staff, students and community members.

Dr. Bakke served as president of the North Little Rock Chamber in 2009, and frequently discussed the importance of linking education and economic development. In those conversations, he regularly brought up student success initiatives, including Achieving the Dream. He included Achieving the Dream priority areas and elements in the strategic planning, budgeting and operating plan processes. In addition, Dr. Bakke supported crosstraining activities

between academic and student services, including adding student services personnel to the Instructional Leadership Team.

**2. Briefly describe how your Board of Trustees was engaged in your ATD work this year.**

The Board of Trustees have heard presentations from faculty and staff involved in Achieving the Dream and have received reports on student success initiatives during their quarterly meetings. They have also had the opportunity to learn more about those initiatives through a weekly e-briefing newsletter and the semi-annual Innovations newsletter.

Board of Trustees members are invited to attend College events where Achieving the Dream is frequently a topic of conversation. For instance, some trustees attended the Fall 2009 Convocation banquet and some participated in strategic planning for the institution. Three trustees served on the host committee for community conversations. Trustees met with Dr. Christine McPhail, ATD coach and Dr. John Cooper, data facilitator, during their April 2010 visit to the campus.

**Use of Evidence to Improve Programs and Services**

**3. Did you use longitudinal data on student cohorts to identify achievement gaps among groups of students? If so, what achievement gaps did you identify? For the purpose of this question, an achievement gap is a disparity in outcomes among student subgroups. Subgroups may be defined by a variety of characteristics, including race/ethnicity, gender, enrollment status, Pell grant eligibility, or other characteristics pertinent to your student population.**

Pulaski Technical College has used longitudinal data on student cohorts to identify achievement gaps among groups of students. The College has been following a selected cohort of students who began college during fall 2004, fall 2005 and fall 2006 semesters. Success rates for the cohort are being measured in developmental math, college algebra, English courses, reading courses, speech communication, history of civilization, psychology, computer concepts, biological science and physical science. Those courses were selected for examination because students in these courses are historically more likely to earn low grades or withdraw. In addition, students of color and low-income students are represented in disproportionately high numbers in these courses. The data disaggregates by race and recipients of Pell grants. Achievement gaps were identified that demonstrated African-Americans did not perform as well as Caucasians and that students who use Pell grants do not perform as well as those who do not have Pell grants. For instance, in basic math, the lowest level of developmental math, 43.8% of students who earned a D, F, withdrew or incomplete were Caucasian, while 64.1% of DFWI students were students of color. Of those DFWI students, 62.8% were Pell grant recipients. In English comp I, 28% of DFWI were Caucasian and 41% were students of color. Of those DFWI students, 41% were Pell grant recipients (*data chart included as appendix*).

Longitudinal data regarding withdrawal was used to support ongoing interventions in developmental mathematics. Results for the fall and spring 2009 semesters demonstrated that the largest number of students withdrew between 12 and 15 weeks into the semester, indicating

that students would benefit from interventions earlier in the semester and alternative formats for developmental math curriculum. For instance, of the 417 students enrolled in basic math in the spring 2009 semester, only four withdrew in January and February; in March, however, 32 students withdrew and, in April, 66 students withdrew from basic math. Altogether, 118 students withdrew from the course, leaving only 229 enrolled at the end of April. Of those 229 who remained enrolled, 83 earned no credit for the course. So, of the 417 students who registered for basic math, only 216, or just under 50%, earned credit for the course and were able to register for pre-algebra, the next level of basic math. Developmental math faculty feel strongly that these statistics point to a need to design interventions into math courses earlier in the semester and to offer developmental math curriculum in formats other than the traditional 15-week semester. They are applying to the National Center for Academic Transformation to participate in a course redesign project that will result in incorporating the Emporium Model modular approach.

*Progress in Implementing Proposed Interventions.*

**4. Please list the titles of the interventions posted on the Interventions Online Tool: The entries on the Interventions Online Tool and your list below should be identical.**

- 1) Increase student success and satisfaction through new student orientation and advising
  - 2) Increase student success in developmental mathematics
5. How do these interventions address achievement gaps or equity concerns on your campus? (Please use the definition of achievement gaps given in Question 3.)

**1) Increase student success and satisfaction through new student orientation and advising**

The new student orientation and advising intervention focuses on achievement gaps or equity concerns by ensuring that first-time entering students have the most accurate, up-to-date information possible and are familiar with Pulaski Tech's campus, faculty, staff and expectations. Longitudinal cohort data demonstrates non-successful (DFWI) grades for up to 59.3% of the cohort in developmental math, 43.5% in English skills and 40.3% in reading skills. The latest IPEDS report shows an overall college retention rate of first-time, full-time students in fall 2007 of 54%. National findings from the Survey of Entering Student Engagement "indicates that completing the equivalent of the first semester (12-15 credit hours) increases students' chances of returning for subsequent semesters, reaching key miletones and ultimately earning certificates and degrees" (2008 Field Test findings, p. 4). This national research validates Pulaski Technical College's current approach of mandatory new student orientation, intrusive advising and opportunities for engagement with staff prior to the beginning of the semester. New student orientation and advising will ensure students are equipped with accurate information, placed in correct courses, are aware of college resources, register in College seminar and engage with peers and personnel.

Pulaski Technical College implemented a mandatory New Student Orientation for the first-time entering freshmen in the fall 2009 semester. At the end of presentations, students met with academic advisors to develop a class schedule. A total of 1,760 students attended orientation.

Of those 1,760, 1,486 enrolled in Pulaski Tech. Of those who attended orientation, 773 returned their evaluations, and mean scores were between 4.12 and 4.78 on a five-point scale.

In the advising intervention, Pulaski Tech has increased the number of advisors from one full-time advisor in August 2008 to FTE of six advisors. These advisors have worked to create a common dialogue in advising, develop advising presentations and train selected faculty in student advising. A new check-in system has been created for advising so that students do not wait in line as long, can sit down while they wait and are able to gauge how much longer they have to wait before seeing an advisor. Advisors have conducted presentations in 35 classes in spring 2010 and are piloting imbedded advising in courses in the Division of Business. This presentation is also available to students and faculty through Blackboard. The advising staff has embraced the idea of more intrusive services through imbedded advising and mobile advising.

The Office of Advising and Counseling coordinated its first Advising Week from April 12 to April 16. The week coincided with the first day of registration for current students in the summer and fall 2010 semesters. The goal of Advising Week was to outreach to our students and provide them with information about advising, degree plans, and financial aid in order to promote student success by teaching students how to be proactive in preparing for graduation and their educational future. We advertised for this event through email, Facebook, classroom visits, posting of flyers throughout the campus and one-on-one contact with students. Advisors assisted a total of 611 students; of those, 553 were advised at the Advising Center on the main campus and 73 students were advised via the mobile advising carts that were strategically stationed throughout campus during the week.

Over the course of the week, the Counseling and Advising staff and various guest speakers from the campus community offered 17 sessions in the Campus Center Foyer and in the RJ Wills Lecture Hall on topics to include sessions for undecided majors, allied health majors, teacher education majors, information on transferring to four-year institutions, financial aid, and suspension and probation. Advisors offered services in the food court and administration building with the use of a mobile advising cart. They also hosted group advising and individual advising sessions in the Campus Center. Over the course of the week, 95 students attended informational sessions. Students who attended the sessions and were advised were eligible to enter for a chance to win numerous prizes, including a grand prize of free tuition for one semester, book store vouchers, food court vouchers, and other door prizes. Door prizes were donated by members of the campus community and were also purchased by a grant given by the Arkansas Collegiate Drug Education Coalition.

Another goal was to outreach to our faculty and staff in order to foster an environment of collaboration between the Office of Counseling and Advising and the rest of the campus community. In order to promote this culture of collaboration, the Counseling and Advising staff hosted an open house reception for PTC faculty and staff in the Advising Center. At this reception, faculty and staff had the opportunity to fill out a survey about advising on PTC's campus.

## **2) *Increase student success in developmental mathematics***

The 2004-2006 Achieving the Dream cohort summary shows that, out of the non-successful students, 64.1% in basic math are students of color; 62.1% in elementary algebra are students of color and 57.1% in intermediate algebra are students of color. Further, students receiving Pell Grants also succeed at lower rates than their comparison groups. Men perform at statistically significant lower levels in elementary and intermediate algebra than do women. Developmental math interventions to positively affect achievement gaps and equity concerns include Learning Communities, Supplemental Instruction/professional tutors, professional development and reviewing data.

The fall 2009 **Learning Community** combined College seminar and elementary algebra—the third of four levels of developmental math—and had a registration of 25 first-time entering, degree-seeking students, with a total of 15 students who completed the semester. At the end of the semester, only 46.7% of students in college seminar earned successful grades and only 40% of the students in elementary algebra earned successful grades. In spring 2010, the course had 16 students, with nine enrolled at the end of April. Grades are not yet available. This is the first time Pulaski Tech has had enough registrations in a Learning Community to conduct the course. Instructors observed that students were more interactive and more engaged with each other. Students were more accountable to one another than in a traditional developmental math course. Developmental **math tutors** were part of the two elementary algebra courses.

Last year, supplemental instruction was offered in a developmental math course with 26 students, and had a success rate of 76.9% compared to 50.8% for the Achieving the Dream cohort and 50.3% from overall college enrollment. While Pulaski Tech is committed to examining challenges involved with its developmental math Learning Community, statistics indicate that supplemental instruction should be part of the college's interventions for the next academic year.

Pulaski Tech hosted two **adjunct training sessions** with about 90% of adjunct instructors attended the sessions.

**6. *Have you used the evaluation data to improve any of your student success interventions? If so, what specific improvements were made based on analysis of data?***

The new student orientation presentation was developed based on data from student focus groups and faculty focus groups. Students described information they wish they had had as freshmen and college seminar faculty provided information on their perception of student needs. Developmental math faculty use pre- and post-tests to monitor student progress and achievement toward learning objectives for each of the four courses in the division. All faculty review results each semester.

Evaluation data regarding learning communities have demonstrated that they could be more successful if linked with basic math. Many more students at Pulaski Tech test into basic math (16 or below on the Compass) than any of the other three sections of developmental math. These students are also the most likely to benefit from the college seminar course.

Evaluation regarding supplemental instruction/professional tutors demonstrates that students did not take advantage of this opportunity outside of the classroom. In spring 2010, the first semester that hours were documented and required, only two students used tutoring on a regular basis. Another two students used supplemental instruction regularly. The developmental math chair is addressing that challenge by requiring use of the study plan in MyMathLab, which requires two hours per week of tutoring.

### **7. *What obstacles (if any) have you faced evaluating these interventions?***

Pulaski Technical College is in the process of adopting the five-step evaluation plan recommended by Achieving the Dream. We have used a work plan, but have not had a logic model and evaluation plan. This delay has created a challenge in evaluating interventions effectively and regularly. In addition, there was a change in leadership and coordination of the Achieving the Dream initiative, which slowed down the implementation of some aspects of our initiatives.

Pulaski Technical College employs 320 adjunct instructors and only 158 full-time faculty. This reliance on part-time faculty makes it a challenge for the college to provide training and resources for adjunct faculty to use in the classroom to promote student success.

Pulaski Technical College runs most of its facilities at 100% capacity six days a week. Estimates show the college needs an additional 330,000 square feet of facilities to serve its enrollment of more than 11,000 students. Lack of classroom space makes it difficult to consider new approaches, such as other formats for developmental math, because only four classrooms are available for developmental math—which had an initial spring 2009 enrollment of 2,249 students. Lack of classroom space also makes it impossible for Pulaski Tech to actually serve all first-time, full-time entering students through the college seminar course. Finally, the college only employs one person in its Institutional Research office, and that person is also responsible for the strategic planning process and accreditation processes as well as institutional research.

Advising staff realizes that they need to have an important role in evaluating their intervention, especially since institutional research is understaffed. It is challenging, however, for them to allocate time to evaluation when other responsibilities seem more urgent.

Developmental math faculty felt that advising was an obstacle to evaluating success of its learning community. Math faculty had to be proactive in recruiting students to register into the learning communities. This recruitment was conducted late in the registration process, after faculty realized that the classes were unlikely to reach the number of students (7) required to hold a class. Students who register so late in the semester are less likely to be successful in their academic courses, which presented an obstacle in evaluating learning communities. Faculty are curious whether students in the learning communities would have been more successful if they registered earlier for the course, but this cannot be evaluated at this time.

It has been challenging to find and keep student supplemental instruction leaders and professional tutors. Both students and professional tutors felt they needed positions that offered a higher salary and more hours of work. Very few students took advantage of tutoring

opportunities. It was difficult to evaluate an intervention that did not have sustained tutors/supplemental instructors or regular use by students.

Finally, the Institutional Research Committee (formerly data team) needs to play an active role next year in the communication of data for Achieving the Dream interventions.

**8. Did you use the data sets submitted to JBL Associates for inclusion in the national database to conduct analyses of the interventions described above? If not, why not?**

Yes  
 No

**9. Did you use ATD's eSTATS to conduct analyses of the interventions described above? If not, why not?**

Yes  
 No

Some of the data in eSTATS needed to be corrected prior to using it to conduct analyses of the interventions. This correction has been completed and our data facilitator trained Pulaski Tech personnel on eSTATS during the April visit. We expect to use eSTATS next year to analyze the success of interventions.

**10a. Briefly describe any substantial changes you propose to make to the interventions listed above.**

We do not expect to make substantial changes to the advising and new student orientation initiative. We do expect to add new strategies and expect to expand services to more students across the campus.

Staff will conduct Advising Week both semesters, will develop an advising syllabus, will conduct orientation in both fall and spring semesters and will use mobile advising carts every week. Staff will research and implement on-line advising as well as on-line degree audits so students can compare their college credits with various technical certificates and associate degrees prior to meeting with their advisor. Advising Week will be tweaked to include more "come and go" information tables, more of a focus on general advising information, more career planning, better marketing and signage and replication of activities at other PTC sites. New student orientation will be conducted similarly to this year, with evaluations from this year's session taken into account. Recommendations for improvements include addressing technology challenges, securing more faculty advisors, training advisors on group advising sessions, reducing orientation sessions from 50 students per session to 30 students per sessions and expanding advising to students at the PTC South site. Staff will research the possibility of providing early alert services to students within TRiO or the Network for Student Success instead of providing early alert to all students. The pilot of early alert resulted in an awareness that rolling it across campus is not feasible at this time.

Developmental math faculty will tweak interventions with a goal of improving use and results. First, the learning community will link basic math and college seminar. Two sections of the

learning community will be offered to full-time, degree-seeking students. Faculty will train advisors and will advise students, which should improve registration for learning communities. They will also promote the learning community to program directors of student support programs, including Network for Student Success and TRiO.

Faculty will tweak supplemental instructors/professional tutoring to make it more intrusive next year. Professional tutors will be hired from the pool of adjunct math instructors. It is expected that tutors will be placed in elementary algebra and intermediate algebra and that tutoring will be offered in class and outside of class. Developmental math chair will meet with the Director of the Learning Assistance Center to ensure that tutors in the Center explain information to students in the same way it is explained in developmental math classrooms.

Next year, adjunct training sessions for developmental math instructors will focus on sharing data, serving underresourced students, sharing data and assessment information, reviewing progress toward Achieving the Dream objectives, and applying new pedagogical practices in the developmental math classroom. We will improve evaluation of services by asking instructors to complete a one-page evaluation at the end of the training session.

Pulaski Technical College will continue to align Achieving the Dream with ongoing student success initiatives, such as TRiO, Career Pathways, Veterans Upward Bound and Network for Student Success. We will improve evaluation of our initiatives by implementing Achieving the Dream's five-step evaluation process.

**10b. List any interventions you have chosen to discontinue. Please indicate why you chose to discontinue them.**

We have chosen to discontinue supplemental instruction in favor of professional tutoring in developmental math courses due to the challenge of finding students who were willing to serve as supplemental instructors for the full semester.

**10c. Briefly describe any new interventions you plan to implement. (These should be entered into the Interventions Online Tool once implementation has begun.)**

We do not plan to implement new interventions in advising and new student orientation or in developmental math.

*Evidence of Improvement in Student Achievement*

1. Please provide a graph or chart presenting evidence of improvement in student achievement.

**New Student Orientation and Retention: First-Time, Degree or Certificate Seeking Cohorts\***

	<b>Initial Cohort</b>	<b>2nd Term</b>	<b>3rd Term</b>	<b>4th Term</b>	<b>5th Term</b>	<b>6th Term</b>
Fall 2007	1,278	79.3%	53.1%	48.1%	39.4%	39.0%
Fall 2008	1,216	82.0%	55.4%	52.6%	n/a	n/a
Fall 2009	1,486	85.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

\*Retained students plus any current or previous term graduates. Includes stop-out returns in subsequent terms.

**Retention: First-Time, Degree or Certificate Seeking Cohorts (FULL-TIME)\***

	<b>Initial Cohort</b>	<b>2nd Term</b>	<b>3rd Term</b>	<b>4th Term</b>	<b>5th Term</b>	<b>6th Term</b>
Fall 2007	892	82.0%	56.4%	50.1%	42.4%	42.8%
Fall 2008	814	84.6%	60.7%	55.3%	n/a	n/a
Fall 2009	1,089	86.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

\*Retained students plus any current or previous term graduates. Includes stop-out returns in subsequent terms.

**Retention: First-Time, Degree or Certificate Seeking Cohorts (PART-TIME)\***

	<b>Initial Cohort</b>	<b>2nd Term</b>	<b>3rd Term</b>	<b>4th Term</b>	<b>5th Term</b>	<b>6th Term</b>
Fall 2007	386	73.3%	45.6%	43.5%	32.4%	30.3%
Fall 2008	402	76.6%	44.8%	47.3%	n/a	n/a
Fall 2009	387	83.7%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

\*Retained students plus any current or previous term graduates. Includes stop-out returns in subsequent terms.

12. Briefly describe at least one intervention you have implemented to achieve the improvement in student outcomes documented in Question 11, including how you believe the intervention helped to improve student outcomes. Include the number of students served and the number of students served as a percentage of total enrollment and of the target population.

**New Student Orientation for First-Time Entering Freshmen**

	COLLEGE-WIDE COHORT			ORIENTATION COHORT			NON-ORIENTATION COHORT		
Fall	Initial Cohort	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)	Attended Orientation	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)	Did Not Attend Orientation	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)
2007*	1,278	79.3%	53.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2008	1,216	82.0%	55.4%	141	86.5%	66.0%	1,075	82.1%	53.5%
2009	1,486	85.1%	n/a	1,286	86.1%	n/a	200	79.0%	n/a

\*A pilot orientation of 97 students was held. However, student identifier data was not collected to ascertain retention numbers.

**New Student Orientation for First-Time Entering Freshmen (FULL-TIME)**

	COLLEGE-WIDE COHORT			ORIENTATION COHORT			NON-ORIENTATION COHORT		
Fall	Initial Cohort	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)	Attended Orientation	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)	Did Not Attend Orientation	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)
2007*	892	82.0%	56.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2008	814	84.6%	60.7%	104	88.5%	66.3%	710	83.8%	58.0%
2009	1,099	86.2%	n/a	964	86.6%	n/a	135	77.0%	n/a

\*A pilot orientation of 97 students was held. However, student identifier data was not collected to ascertain retention numbers.

**New Student Orientation for First-Time Entering Freshmen (PART-TIME)**

	COLLEGE-WIDE COHORT			ORIENTATION COHORT			NON-ORIENTATION COHORT		
Fall	Initial Cohort	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)	Attended Orientation	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)	Did Not Attend Orientation	Spring Retention (2nd Term)	Fall Retention (3rd Term)
2007*	386	73.3%	45.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2008	402	76.6%	44.8%	37	75.7%	62.2%	365	78.9%	44.7%
2009	387	83.7%	n/a	322	83.9%	n/a	65	83.1%	n/a

Pulaski Technical College has implemented mandatory new student orientation, which was attended by 1,486 of the college's first-time entering students. This is 14% of the Pulaski Tech's total fall 2009 enrollment of 10,258 students and 87% of the target population. The data documents that college-wide 2<sup>nd</sup> semester retention for students who completed orientation increased by approximately 3% per year since 2007. Third semester data appears to be on the rise as well for the overall college based on two years of data (2007 and 2008).

Title III piloted in-person orientation for first-time, certificate or degree seeking students beginning in 2007 (97 students) and again in 2008 (141 students). In 2007, there was NOT identifiable student data to track retention; however, since 2008 orientation, such tracking has been possible. Fall 2009 was the first semester that new student orientation was mandatory for all first-time, certificate or degree seeking students. All but 13% of first-time, certificate or degree seeking students attended (200 of 1,486 students did NOT attend). The data demonstrates that:

- Full-time students with orientation were retained at higher levels than full-time students without orientation (87% retention for full-time students with orientation compared to 77% retention for those without).
- There does not appear to be any noticeable difference for part-time students with or without orientation (84% retention for those with orientation and 83% retention for those without). There were also fewer students in the part-time population.
- Based on these findings, we believe there has been excellent scale up of orientation from the pilot population to the general first-time, certificate or degree seeking population.

Was this intervention developed as part of your college's ATD work? It was part of Achieving the Dream and the U.S. Department of Education Strengthening Institutions Title III grant.

### *Institutional Research and Information Technology Capacity*

13. Number of FTEs at your institution devoted to institutional research: 1
14. Number of FTEs at your institution devoted to information technology: 11
15. What institutional research challenges has the college faced this year? Check all that apply.
- None
  - Too few IR staff positions
  - Too few IT staff positions
  - Unfilled staff positions
  - Inadequate IR staff training in needed skills
  - Difficulty retrieving useful, timely data
  - Other. Please describe:
16. Please describe any increases in institutional research capacity at your institution this year. Include staff increases as well as new hardware or software acquisitions.

Pulaski Technical College is working toward increased capacity in institutional research. We were able to hire a ½ FTE to support the IR function. The employee, however, left after two weeks for a full-time position at another location. We do expect to hire another part-time person in that area and have requested a full-time institutional research associate for FYE 2011.

17. Briefly describe how your institution has used data on student progression and outcomes in:

*Program review and evaluation*

Departmental assessments are linked to learning outcomes, documented and tracked through TracDat software and updated annually. Assessment teams review annual assessment reports and provide feedback to faculty and Division leadership. Those reports and feedback are used to improve services for the following academic year. Academic administrators who are interested in additional program review and evaluation request reports from the Office of Institutional Research, which are returned within a reasonable period of time. For example, data has supported increasing the number of basic math sections offered to students based on Compass score results. Data gathered by institutional research in spring 2010 documented that students are most likely to withdraw about a month before the end of the semester, supporting a goal of implementing interventions early in the semester, increasing the availability of tutoring or other interventions as the semester progresses and offering curriculum in alternative formats. Finally, student evaluations help match the instructor to the appropriate level of math for his/her teaching style.

*Strategic planning*

The current strategic plan covers a five year period from 2005 to 2010. Pulaski Technical College is updating that plan to cover the next five years. The college has used data on student progression and outcomes as part of the foundational process for updating the plan. Staff and faculty were assigned to serve in specific subcommittees focused on nine existing strategic plan goals: 1) workforce development; 2) university studies; 3) access to higher education; 4) student success; 5) quality learning environment; 6) educational partnerships; 7) continuing education and community services; 8) developing resources and 9) continuous planning and improvement. Those involved in the process, including representatives of local business and corporations, Board of Trustees members, Foundation Board of Directors, staff and faculty, reviewed data as it supported their focus area, including student progression and outcome data completed for Achieving the Dream.

*Budget allocation*

The Vice President for Finance distributes budget request forms to vice presidents and deans in January of each year and holds budget hearings in April. The budget request forms include a request to link budget requests to data regarding the relationship between the request and support of student success initiatives.

**Broad Engagement**

*Faculty and Staff*

18. Please complete the following table based on current course and team/committee assignments.

	<b>FT Faculty</b>	<b>PT Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Newly engaged this year</b>
# serving on ATD core, data, or other ATD teams	15	0	21	18
# involved in ATD intervention delivery	9	30	7	4

19. Please estimate the percentage of *full-time faculty* involved in each of the following activities:

- 75% Participated in data collection and/or analysis
- 30% Participated in focus groups or surveys related to Achieving the Dream
- 40% Participated in professional development to further student success
- 50% Other. Please provide the name of the activity: Fall convocation

20. Please estimate the percentage of *part-time faculty* involved in each of the following activities:

- 40% Participated in data collection and/or analysis
- 26% Participated in focus groups or surveys related to Achieving the Dream
- 10% Participated in professional development to further student success
- 50% Other. Please provide the name of the activity: Adjunct orientation

21. Please estimate the percentage of *staff* involved in each of the following activities:

- 25% Participated in data collection and/or analysis
- 10% Participated in focus groups or surveys related to Achieving the Dream
- 20% Participated in professional development to further student success
- \_\_\_ Other. Please provide the name of the activity:

22. Please describe a particularly successful faculty or staff engagement activity that is helping or has helped to improve student outcomes. Please include an estimate of the number of faculty and staff involved.

Adjunct training sessions during fall adjunct orientation and on Saturday mornings in the spring and meetings with full-time faculty in the Math Department were particularly successful. About 90%, or 25, of adjunct instructors attended training, where they discussed accreditation activities, teaching strategies, curriculum realignment, alternative methods of structuring developmental math curriculum, assessment, overcoming barriers to student success and administrative tools like the gradebook. Meeting with college math instructors allowed for a honest conversation about student performance and methods to improve performance.

Pulaski Technical College's advising staff has greatly increased the number of professional advisors and faculty advisors trained in a common dialogue across campus. First, advising staff worked with faculty to define that common dialogue and then developed a powerpoint and training materials for distribution. The manual includes degree plans, general information about Pulaski Technical College, student services, student ID information, campus maps, community

resources and other pertinent information. All faculty and staff who attend the advisor training receives a manual. The training covers basics of academic advising, reasons to visit the PTC Advising Center, tips for registration, degree options, PTC catalog, MyPTC Portal, information about the Advising Center's Facebook page and an opportunity for questions. This year, they trained seven staff in Career Pathways, six in the Network for Student Success, two in Veteran's Upward Bound, 12 faculty in Fine Arts and Humanities, two in early childhood/teacher education, one in business and one instructor in accounting, as well as 20 full and part-time advising staff. All trained faculty and staff conduct advising for students.

### *Students*

23. Please estimate the percentage of *students* involved in each of the following activities:

15% Surveys

2% Focus groups (conducted by Ottenheimer and LR South Libraries and Advising)

1% Student participation on planning or advisory committees

8% Other. Please provide the name of the activity: Classroom presentations about advising services

24. Please describe a particularly successful student engagement activity that is helping or has helped to improve student outcomes. Please include an estimate of the number of students involved.

Pulaski Tech hosted its first mandatory New Student Orientation this academic year.

Participants eligible for orientation were defined as first time entering freshmen who have never attended college and were degree/certificate seeking. One-hour sessions were offered three times a day July 8 through August 7. From August 10 to August 12, sessions were offered every two hours from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Students received a comprehensive folder with an individualized degree plan, test scores (ACT or Compass) and placement guide, information on creating a MyPTC Portal Account, student ID card information, campus map, payment plan information, financial aid quick guide, information on student success initiatives and course planning guides. The orientation session began with an icebreaker and then a presentation that focused on:

- Four Things Successful PTC Students Know
- Computers, Technology & Websites
- Locating Information, People & Resources – PTC Homepage
- Financial Aid
- Learning Assistance Center
- College seminar
- How to Read & Build a Schedule
- Pre-requisites
- Differences in Associates Degrees
- Academic Advising

At the end of the presentation, students met with academic advisors to discuss the basics of developing a class schedule. The student's degree plan, test scores and areas of interest were

used to decide which courses to build their schedule. All students were required to sign up for College seminar or Career Seminar based on degree plan. Advisors led students to the computer lab in the IT building once they completed building schedules. Each student logged onto a computer and did the initial set up of their MyPTC portal access accounts and their student PTC email accounts. Advisors led students through the process of class registration. Students were able to choose which campus they wanted to attend and then add their courses according to their needs within Campus Connect. Advisors reviewed their schedule and signed off on the schedule before students were able to leave. All students were asked to complete an evaluation of the NSO before leaving. A total of 1,760 students attended orientation; of the 773 evaluations returned, and mean scores were between 4.12 and 4.78 on a five-point scale. Students who attended New Student Orientation are being tracked to compare retention and success to the general population and Achieving the Dream cohort.

Pulaski Tech has been successful in securing outside funding for several programs to support student success. These are:

- A **U.S. Department of Education Predominantly Black Institutions** grant (October 2008-September 2010) to develop fully-staffed black male initiative programs, called Network for Student Success, at Pulaski Technical College’s main campus and Little Rock-West for up to 300 students.
- A **U.S. Department of Education Veterans Upward Bound** grant (2007-2012) to enable 120 veterans of the armed forces to achieve their higher education goals. The program goal is to assist veterans in developing skills and motivation necessary for success in higher education.
- **U. S. Department of Education Student Support Services (TRiO)**, funded from 2005 to 2010 with renewal currently pending, serves 180 first-generation, low-income, and/or disabled students with intensive academic programming and support services.
- **Career Pathways** provides support services and direct financial assistance to more than 450 low-income parents who want to improve their education and employability. **Center for Working Families**, funded through Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and based on an Annie E. Casey Foundation program model, is providing financial literacy services to Career Pathways students.
- **U.S. Department of Education Strengthening Institutions Title III** (2006-2011) is being used to improve instructional methods for at-risk students and providing other structures, such as new student orientation, professional development and early alert, to promote student success.

### *External Community*

25. In what ways have you engaged the *external community* in your ATD efforts this year? Check all that apply.

- Collaborative activities with K-12 schools to improve student preparation for college
- Data sharing with local high schools
- Collaborative activities with four-year institutions to improve student success
- Collaborative activities with community organizations
- Collaborative activities with employers.
- Other. Please provide the name of the activity:

26. Please describe a particularly successful *community* engagement activity that is helping or has helped improve student readiness and/or success. Please include an estimate of the number of community members involved.

“Help Put the Community in Community College” was the theme of two community conversations hosted at Pulaski Technical College in April 2010. Using the Public Agenda framework for community conversations as a guide, the college developed a structured initiative to engage its local communities/stakeholders and to generate honest, productive dialogue to help the college chart a course for improving student success.

A total of 128 representatives of business, industry, government, education and non-profit organizations attended the conversations. An 11-member host committee of community leaders was charged with encouraging participation, greeting guests, participating in and helping to facilitate small group break-out conversations and assisting with follow up.

The college’s Achieving the Dream director provided an overview of the college and the Achieving the Dream initiative as well as some basic information concerning student success at Pulaski Technical College that was derived from the college’s Achieving the Dream data. Upon breaking into small-group conversations, participants were charged with sharing knowledge about the college, determining the most pressing community needs in the college’s service area, developing ways Pulaski Tech can help to meet community needs and strengthen relationships with business, industry, education and government, and brainstorming some things the college and the community can do to address the issues of high remediation rates and low student retention rates and to assist students in overcoming barriers.

Common threads of conversation included innovative ways to address the needs of under-prepared students, the need for additional community outreach programs targeted at Hispanic and low-income populations, the need to develop a stronger work ethic in students, the need to place a greater emphasis on skills needed in the workplace, the need to strengthen student support services and the need to work more closely with the public school districts. A full report is being compiled and will be shared with college stakeholders, including business and industry, education, government, non-profit organizations, faculty and staff, students and Achieving the Dream coaches.

### **Systemic Institutional Improvement**

27. Briefly describe how you have aligned your Achieving the Dream work with your institution’s goals for improving student outcomes, other major initiatives designed to improve student success, and the institution’s core activities, processes, and policies this year.

Pulaski Technical College’s strategic plan states that the college will continue its commitment to student success by providing programs and services that will help students achieve their educational and career goals.

In as much, the college continues to provide an extensive placement testing and developmental education program. Students who lack sufficient math, reading, and writing skills to succeed in

college-level courses are enrolled in developmental courses in one or more of these areas. The College seminar: A Pathway to Excellence course is also mandatory for all students who are required to take two or more developmental courses and focuses on strategies for success in college.

The Achieving the Dream advising and developmental mathematics initiatives, working in tandem with initiatives recognized in the college's Title III program and Foundations of Excellence strategies, has provided a cornerstone for the work of the college's Student Success Committee, which provides input into the college's strategic planning process.

In order to continue to strengthen student success, the college has outlined the following objectives in its strategic plan:

- Continue to create an environment that promotes values that are important for the college, the students, and the community, such as a work ethic, integrity, and an appreciation for cultural diversity.
- Continue to strengthen Pulaski Tech's student orientation program as a means of promoting student success.
- Continue enhancing the college's Learning Assistance Center to help students who require extra support to successfully complete their courses.
- Continue to develop and implement student retention strategies.
- Expand the student advising program and continue to develop a full-service Counseling and Advising center to support students in selecting and successfully completing their programs.
- Continue to develop the Career Services Center to assist students in selecting careers and educational programs that will complement their interests and abilities.
- Expand the student life and leadership opportunities for students and the college community.
- Expand full services to all Pulaski Tech locations.
- Respond to the education and training needs of the growing Hispanic community in central Arkansas.

The following measures will be used to evaluate and improve the effectiveness in carrying out these strategies:

- Success rate of developmental education students
- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Student and graduate feedback
- Success in employment
- Success after transfer
- Student satisfaction
- Number of Hispanic students served

In order to link the strategic plan with the activities Pulaski Tech will deliver and the resources required for delivery, the college has developed an annual calendar for operational planning, assessment and budgeting:

<b>FALL SEMESTER</b>
The Pulaski Technical College operating plan is updated.
Annual program assessment reports are due October 1; these reports are based on assessment data from the previous year.
<b>SPRING SEMESTER</b>
Budget requests are due and are supported by planning priorities, data and assessment findings and recommendations.
Budget recommendations are made to the Pulaski Tech Board of Trustees by late spring.
Instructional departments and other units collect assessment data each spring to be analyzed in the fall.
<b>FALL SEMESTER</b>
The annual cycle begins again.

Evaluation process: Pulaski Technical College demonstrates through the budgeting process its commitment to the improvement of student success. The Budget Committee gives priority to requests for resources that will strengthen initiatives aimed at improving student success rates.

**28. Briefly describe how you have aligned your Achieving the Dream work with the institution's ongoing accreditation activities.**

Arkansas is in the North Central region, and its accredited colleges and universities are members of the Higher Learning Commission. HLC maintains two accreditation paths: the tradition 10-year Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality and the newer seven-year Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). In 2008, Pulaski Technical College began the application process to join AQIP, which is based on timely continuous improvement. Pulaski Tech was accepted into AQIP in 2009 and began implementing a minimum of three yearly action projects as required by AQIP. These action projects were based upon internal research of demonstrated areas of need. Two of Pulaski Tech's current action projects overlap with Achieving the Dream initiatives.

Advising is aligning Achieving the Dream work with the institution's ongoing accreditation activities by focusing an AQIP action project on developing a comprehensive, customer-service based advisor training program. A comprehensive training program is needed to ensure that all advisors are adequately trained and have the necessary skills to work with our students. Milestones include the training program, completion and evaluation of advisors who complete the program, student evaluations and continuing improvement, implementation and evaluation of the program.

Developmental math has aligned Achieving the Dream work with the institution's ongoing accreditation activities by focusing an AQIP action project on mathematics success. The action project began in April 2009 and is designed to increase successful grade rates of A, B and C in developmental mathematics and to increase successful enrollment and passage in College Algebra. Pulaski Tech expects to improve communication among faculty in Developmental Math and College Algebra through group sessions that bring all math faculty together to discuss reasons for low success, methods to address the challenge and the formulation of implementation

plans for improvement. A 2010-2011 AQIP project will involve specific curriculum and policy solutions derived from this year's process.

29. Briefly describe your greatest Achieving the Dream accomplishment this year.

For the first time, first-time, full-time students were required to attend New Student Orientation. It was a full-scale orientation, with thousands of students who were more prepared for college because of the orientation. Student evaluations were positive and campus personnel worked as a team to institute the orientation.

30. Briefly describe your greatest disappointment or setback (if any) with ATD this year.

Developmental math faculty are disappointed that supplemental instructors were difficult to retain, making it a very challenging intervention. They are also disappointed that the learning communities were not as successful as they had hoped for a first-time intervention.

31. In the summer of 2009, you received feedback on your 2009 annual report from MDC and your coach/data facilitator team. Have you incorporated that feedback into your practices and programs this year? If so, how? If not, why not?

Pulaski Technical College has addressed several pertinent observations made in the feedback from MDC and our coach/data facilitator team. Dr. Dan Bakke, College President, has reviewed the roles and responsibilities of key personnel as they relate to Achieving the Dream. He asked Augusta Farver, Dean of the Division of Business, to lead the Achieving the Dream initiative for our campus.

We have strengthened the IR office capacity by institutionalizing the use of TracDat, beginning to empower the Institutional Research Committee (formerly data team) to disseminate data across campus and conducting proactive meetings with faculty to determine data needs.

We are applying the five-point evaluation plan recommended by Achieving the Dream, with student services leadership developing a logic model around new student orientation and advising initiatives. These evaluation plan will be presented to the Administrative Leadership Team and used as a model for developmental math and other student success initiatives.

The Institutional Research Committee has been created as a permanent committee recognized by Faculty Senate, and has a membership of 14 staff and faculty members. They have reviewed the Achieving the Dream evaluation plan and will support its creation and use across campus. They will also lead efforts to review Achieving the Dream data and communicate data results across campus.

Pulaski Tech is creating opportunities to hear student voices through orientation focus groups, feedback in classroom presentations by advising staff and focus groups hosted by the library staff to determine how the library could better serve students.

Pulaski Tech has addressed involving faculty and student services staff on committees concerned with student success by adding the Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Enrollment Services to the College's Instructional Leadership Team, comprised of deans and the Vice

President of Instruction. Further, the core team for Achieving the Dream has evolved in the Student Services Initiative Committee, with representation by 22 faculty and staff members.

Pulaski Tech began the process of creating a student success agenda unique to our institution during the fall 2009 Convocation session. Faculty and staff participated in an interactive process of gathering descriptive phrases to build a foundation of a student success agenda. Following that process, the Student Success Committee adopted the following definition, which was approved by Faculty Senate: ***“Student success occurs when students accomplish their educational goals at Pulaski Technical College and finish what they start. Student success is accomplished through the completion of any of the following areas: certificate, associate of applied science, associate of arts, associate of science, associate of applied teaching, enhancemnet of career or personal skills and course work that promotes life-long learning.”***

Jayne Pyle, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, is coordinating all on-campus professional development opportunities. She has instituted an on-line registration, has conducted focus groups of faculty to determine professional development needs, has presented information about available trainings at faculty meetings and has promoted a wide variety of trainings to faculty.

Pulaski Tech is aligning our Achieving the Dream interventions with accreditation, planning and budgeting. Accreditation projects include improvement in math and improvement in advising. Budgeting requests require documentation that appropriate data was used to determine need for additional funds for specific activities.

32. Is there anything else you would like MDC or your funder (if applicable) to know about your work this year? Are there tools or technical assistance that the ATD partnership can provide to support Achieving the Dream on your campus?

We are currently implementing the five-step Achieving the Dream evaluation plan with logic model in our intervention areas. We will appreciate continued support in creating and monitoring those plans.

We are currently researching specific uses of e-STATS and JBL data for dissemination across campus. We would appreciate information regarding how other Achieving the Dream institutions use this data. The Institutional Research Committee is expected to play a significant role in spreading data information to faculty across campus, and would benefit from information regarding best practices at other colleges.

Finally, developmental math has faced challenges implementing Supplemental Instruction, professional tutoring and learning communities. Faculty in that area would also benefit from information regarding best practices and lessons learned on campuses similar to Pulaski Technical College.

## **Appendix: Baseline findings of student success**

Course	Total DFW/NCW	RACIAL COMPARISON			PELL COMPARISON			
		Caucasian DFW/NCW	Students of Color DFW/NCW	Equality of Variance Significance	Equality of Means Significance	Pell DFW/NCW	Equality of Variance Significance	Equality of Means Significance
Lowest DEVE Math	59.3%	43.8%	64.1%	Yes	Yes	62.8%	No	Yes
Elementary Algebra	55.9%	45.4%	62.1%	Yes	Yes	58.7%	Yes	Yes
Intermediate Algebra	52.1%	45.0%	57.1%	No	Yes	53.7%	No	Yes
College Algebra	32.8%	29.1%	38.9%	Yes	Yes	34.9%	Yes	No
English Skills	43.5%	29.7%	46.7%	Yes	Yes	44.1%	No	No
English Composition Fundamentals	37.7%	28.8%	41.0%	Yes	Yes	39.8%	Yes	Yes
English Composition I	35.9%	28.0%	45.8%	Yes	Yes	41.0%	Yes	Yes
Reading Skills	40.3%	38.8%	40.4%	No	No	40.6%	No	No
Reading Improvement	36.5%	23.6%	39.4%	Yes	Yes	38.2%	Yes	No
College Reading	27.9%	24.0%	29.4%	Yes	No	29.9%	Yes	No
Speech Communication	35.6%	26.3%	45.3%	Yes	Yes	41.3%	Yes	Yes
History of Civilization I	37.8%	30.9%	46.8%	Yes	Yes	44.3%	Yes	Yes
History of Civilization II	32.0%	26.1%	40.7%	Yes	Yes	38.1%	Yes	Yes
Psychology & the Human Experience	34.0%	25.9%	43.1%	Yes	Yes	39.2%	Yes	Yes
Computer Concepts	37.2%	27.9%	43.2%	Yes	Yes	41.1%	Yes	Yes
Biological Science	37.6%	30.3%	48.4%	Yes	Yes	45.0%	Yes	Yes
Physical Science	21.8%	19.4%	28.0%	Yes	No	26.8%	Yes	Yes

### Table Narrative

This table summarizes the non-success rates for developmental and gatekeeper courses at Pulaski Technical College. Non-success rates for development courses include grades of no-credit (NC) and withdrawal (W). Non-success rates for college-level courses include grades of D,F and withdrawal.

Levene's test for equality of variance and t-tests are used to establish statistical significance (p scores) for the analysis groups. Levene's test checks for equal variance between the groups. When equal variance is confirmed or not confirmed, appropriate standard deviation equations are used in the subsequent t-test for equality of means. For the racial comparison, students of color are compared to Caucasian students. For the Pell comparison, Pell recipients are compared to non-Pell recipients.

The t-test for equality of means establishes whether or not the non-successful grades of the analysis groups are statistically different from one another. Where significance is confirmed (“Yes”), the assumption may be made that the average of non-successful grades between the two groups differ beyond simple chance.

Developmental mathematics shows the greatest need among developmental and gatekeeper courses. The developmental math courses rank in the top three courses with non-successful grades. Each has significant t-test values for racial and Pell equality of means. Thus, it may be inferred that students of color and students receiving Pell grants succeed at lower rates than their comparison groups.

The rest of the developmental curriculum (writing and reading) ranks highly among non-successful grades. Both developmental writing courses appear to have statistically significant differences among racial groups; however, only Composition Fundamentals (the higher of the two offerings) presents statistically different t-test results for Pell recipients. Even though Reading has high non-success rate totals, there does not appear to be any statistical difference in the means of racial pairings and Pell/non-Pell recipients in the three reading courses.

Non-successful grades should ideally reflect a normal distribution, whereby 30% or less of the students receive NC, D, F or W. All but two of the developmental and gatekeeper courses have total rates in excess of 30%. Furthermore, t-tests for equality of means indicate that there are racial disparities in non-success in 14 of 17 courses and Pell disparities in 12 of 17 courses.