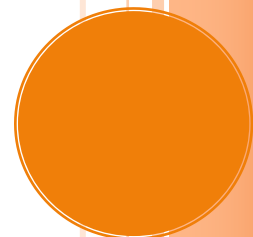


GATEWAY TO COLLEGE - HIGHLINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Annual Report – 2011-2012 Academic Year

Gateway to College – Highline Community College has completed its first year as an alternative high school program targeted at youths that have dropped out of high school or behind on college credits. This report details the successes of the first year.

Kao Saechao
6/22/2012



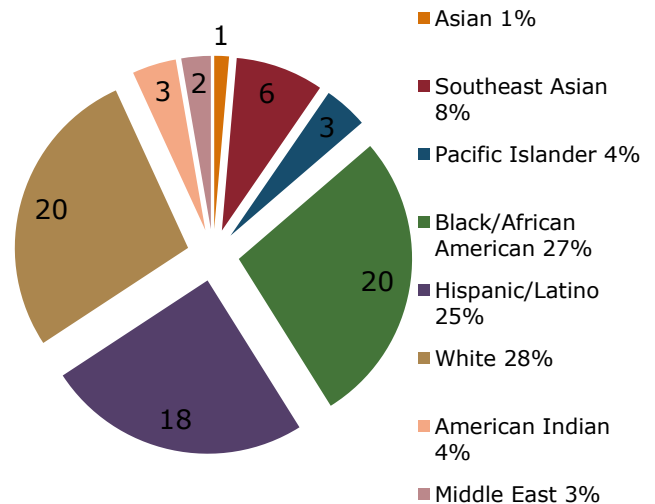
Gateway to College - Highline Community College

Annual Report – 2011-2012 Academic Year

For the Gateway to College (GtC) program at Highline Community College, the 2011-2012 year was focused solely on improving student learning and addressing the challenges in transitioning students – mainly low income students of color – from high school to college. There were many successes as well as challenges, and these successes would not be possible without support from our local school district partners – Highline School District and Federal Way School District. Most importantly, I would like to thank Mike Sita – Principal at New Start High School and Principal at Highline CHOICE Academy from Highline School District – and Judy Lemmel – dDirector of ELL, GATE, @ Administrative Training Federal Way Public Schools from Federal Way School District – for their support because GtC would not have its successes without them. I, also, want to thank the GtC staff and faculty for all the hours they put into working with our students, in particular my esteemed colleagues Jennifer Charles and Bopha Mao. In this report, I will share information on student demographics, enrollment numbers, program philosophy, persistence rates, and student success stories.

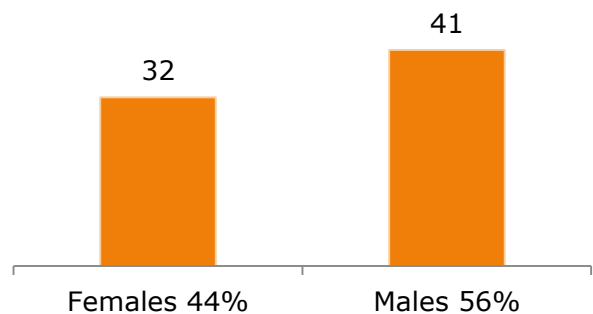
Student Demographics

Students entering GtC carry a rich history and background and this is evident in the diversity of our students. The average age of entry is a little over 17 and the average GPA is about 1.5. Two cohorts were admitted for the academic year. Cohort 1 consisted of a morning and afternoon group and cohort 2 was admitted during Winter quarter. Slightly more male students were admitted than female students.



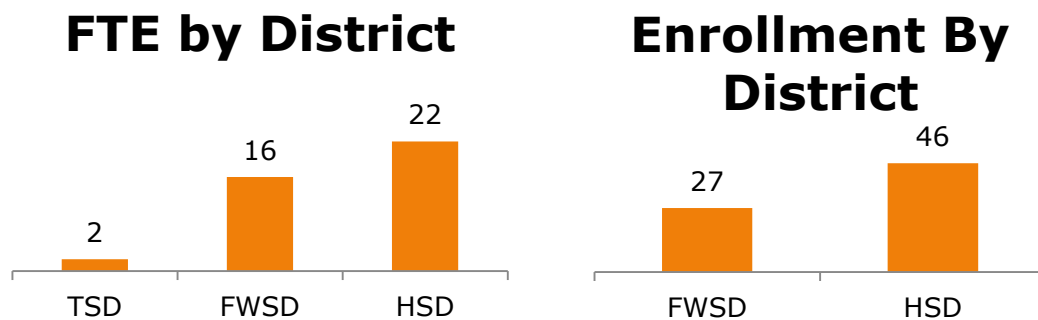
Sending High Schools

We had students referred from over 30 high schools and 12 different school districts. Our top five sending high schools are as follows: Federal Way High School, Decatur High School, Thomas Jefferson High School, Mount Rainier High School, and Foster High School.



Enrollment Numbers

One of the goals for this academic year was to establish GtC as a viable pathway towards graduation for its student population, while hitting a target enrollment of 75. We were able to **enroll 73 students** in the two cohorts with a **total FTE of 40**. Overall, the total number of students wanting to enroll in GtC was more than we could admit – thanks in no small part to the school counselors and staff – but the focus this year was crafting a curriculum that prepares students for the rigors of the college campus while delivering high quality instruction, so we did not quite reach our enrollment projection.



FIRST YEAR OUTCOMES

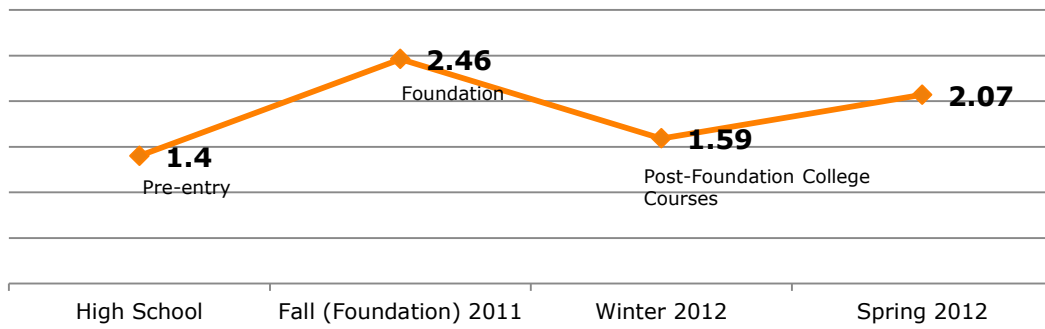
Program Philosophy

At Gateway to College, the Foundation quarter provides the entry point where curriculum and instruction prepares students for the academic rigors of the college classroom. The goal is provide the students with the transferrable skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking that is so important in today's school and work environment so that students can be ready for the next step. Furthermore, a college-going culture based on **effort** (time spent on school work), **commitment** (attendance), and **excellence** (academic performance) acts as a compass and measure of progress for students to constantly push themselves towards academic success. In other words, GtC is built around the theme of "productive persistence" and that is the belief that pushing students to perform better academically, in addition to instilling a growth mindset, each quarter they are in the program provides an environment that helps them mature into academia or the workforce.

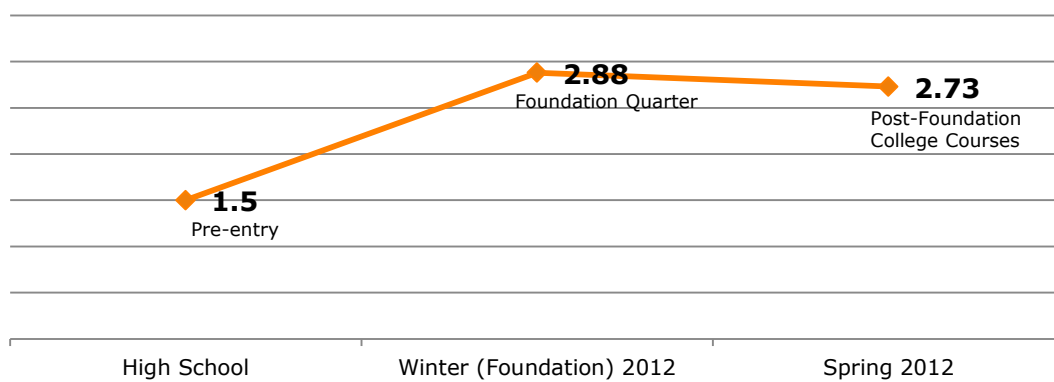
Productive Persistence

The overall outcome for the first year Foundation completers is that persistence level hovered around 80% while GPA slightly increases from Fall to Spring with a slight dip the first quarter in college courses (post-foundation). One significant outcome of the first year is the substantial increase in GPA in post-foundation courses between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2.

Cohort 1 – Persistence and GPA Outcomes



Cohort 2 – Persistence and GPA Outcomes



Student Success Stories

For this academic year, we have had many student success stories – most notably we had **two graduates for this academic year and 5 Distinguished Scholars** – that speak to the heart of what GtC is all about and those values are effort as measured by time completing school work, commitment as measured by attendance (90% and above), and excellence as measured academic performance (3.0GPA and above). For the students that achieve all three, they were awarded our Distinguished Scholar award. In this section I will present the stories of three Distinguished Scholars and one graduate.

Mason Christensen – Distinguished Scholar (FWSD)

Mason is a student that came to our program having achieved academic excellence but he was on the downward trend. He had stopped going to school and moved out by himself. He came to GtC stating that he was ready to turn his life around and focus on his education. Now that he is in GtC with the constant support of the staff, he has shown through his actions that he can commit to his education. He recently completed Spring quarter with courses in Philosophy 101, Computer Science 101, and Math 141 and earned a GPA of 3.9. Here is what Mason had to say about his experience in GtC.



Why didn't high school work for you?

I had to move while I was in high school to a couple different cities. Because of that I was behind in high school credits. At first, I tried to go back to a regular high school but was referred to internet academy, but then I heard about Gateway to College.

How has Gateway to College been helpful?

The opportunity to take college level classes and having someone to talk to like a guidance counselor. After being out of school for a while, it helped me transition back into school. That's where the foundation quarter was very helpful, in addition to getting credits towards my high school graduation.

Patricia Kama – Distinguished Scholar (HSD)

Patricia was a student that entered GtC with a mission. She was motivated but needed more advising to determine the best trajectory for her and in her time at GtC has decided to change her career goal from social worker to lawyer. Her goal was to help people and with a little fine tuning as what options were available to her, she has decided to change career choice and she has become the model of a Gateway student. She finished Spring quarter with a GPA of 3.21. Here's what she had to say about the program.



Why didn't high school work out for you?

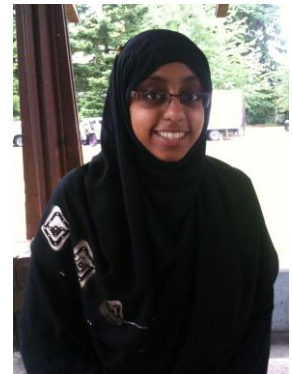
The students were childish and I wasn't learning. I came from Congo and going to high school here in the US was really hard. I was not learning at the school because the teachers were distracted in the classroom. For example, one of my teachers would argue with a student for the whole class, get mad, and then leave.

What has your Gateway to College experience been like?

It has been awesome because I get the one-on-one help. It teaches us to be responsible. They make sure we are taking the class that will help us. They are helping us take the next step to do well. Surprisingly, the planner helps me organize.

Leyla Ibrahim – Distinguished Scholar (HSD)

Leyla was close to not even starting GtC. At her information session, she was not planning on taking the next step but at the last moment decided to go through with the application process. Fortunately for GtC, she followed through and is a model for what a GtC student embodies. She was about to achieve the Distinguished Scholar for two quarters in a row and has been very helpful in tutoring her peers in GtC. She has been a pioneer and has helped establish the standards of a GtC student. She finished Spring quarter with a GPA of 3.88. Here is what she had to say about the program.



Why didn't high school work for me?

I went to a different high school compared to normal and didn't receive enough support. It was out of the country and in a different language. When I returned to the US, I did not want to be a part of the drama of everyday high school life.

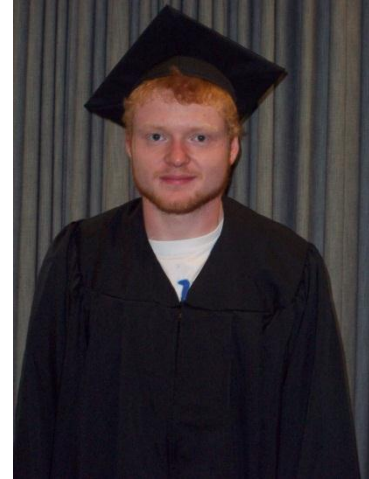
What was the Gateway to College experience been like?

The Gateway to College experience has been awesome because it allowed me to see what college was like. The counselors in the program have been awesome. They provided support and encouragement when I needed it. I feel like I am getting more

than I expected out of the program. I didn't realize I would so much help in my classes. I feel like everyone should know that Gateway to College is a place where dedicated students should join.

Quincy Muir – Gateway Graduate (HSD)

Quincy started GtC without much motivation and was just ready to graduate with his high school diploma. He wasn't missing too many credits, so most would think his time in GtC was not too difficult. Quincy had his ups and down and was able to scrape by and provide GtC with a lasting memory of his impact. During his pre-foundation evaluation period he created an artwork that depicts the challenges facing students who know that education is important but feels like they have to climb over barbed wires to reach their goals. It's a powerful piece that is currently framed at our center. At GtC we recognize, not only academic performance, but the importance of creativity as an outlet to increase self confidence and that what Quincy was able to do. Here is what he had to say about GtC.



Why didn't high school work for you?

High school didn't work because there was a lot of problems with the schools. I was distracted all the time. In my junior year, I was thinking I wasn't get the support I needed from the counselors.



How has Gateway to College been helpful?

It put me in an environment where I can put my brain at a place where I can learn. I still procrastinated but the constant pushing by the teachers and Gateway people helped and I felt I had expectations from my family to finished what I started in high school.

What are your plans after high school?

What I learned from getting my diploma is the social skills to help me do well in my job and in my life. I hope to start my own private business around photography and if that doesn't go well, I hope to go back to college.

Next Steps

In closing, here are the highlights for the first year:

- Two graduates who learned effort, commitment, and excellence will help them achieve success

- Academic performance continues to increase quarterly
- High persistence levels when compared to national levels
- Significant number of students were able to pass the HSPE
- Support from Highline and Federal Way School Districts
- Partnership with the local Des Moines Area Food Bank

I want to end by thanking our local districts for their support of the program. I would also like to thank all the school counselors for their support in referring students. We would not be able to turn these students around if it wasn't for all the hard work that the school counselors, administrators, and staff put into these students before entering GtC. This has been a promising first year and I look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,

Kao Saechao, *M.Ed.*
Program Director
Gateway to College – Highline Community College