The Role of In-House Evaluation in Program Implementation and Management

Examples from the City University of New York

*National Association for Welfare Research & Statistics (NAWRS)*
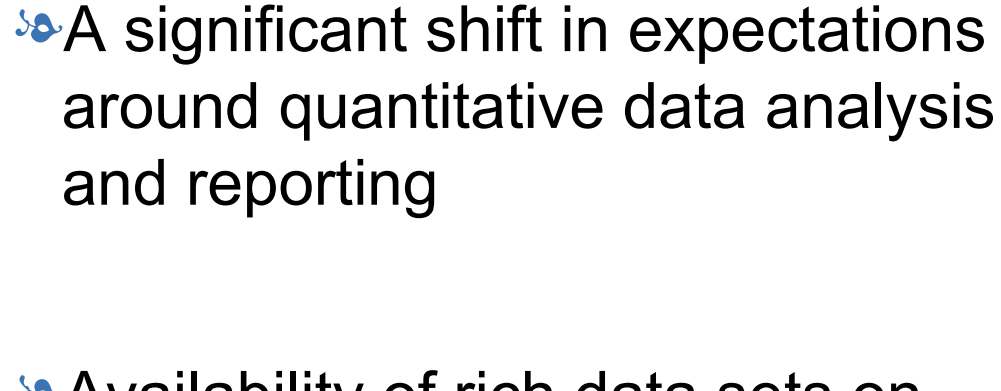*August 19, 2013*

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- The City University of New York (CUNY) is the nation's largest urban public university serving more than 540,000 students in matriculated degree, certificate and continuing education programs

- Includes a wide range of programs and initiatives, including adult literacy, college transition, workforce development and continuing education, and collaborative programs with the NYC public school system.

CUNY

- 11 senior colleges
- 7 community colleges
- Honors college
- 5 professional schools
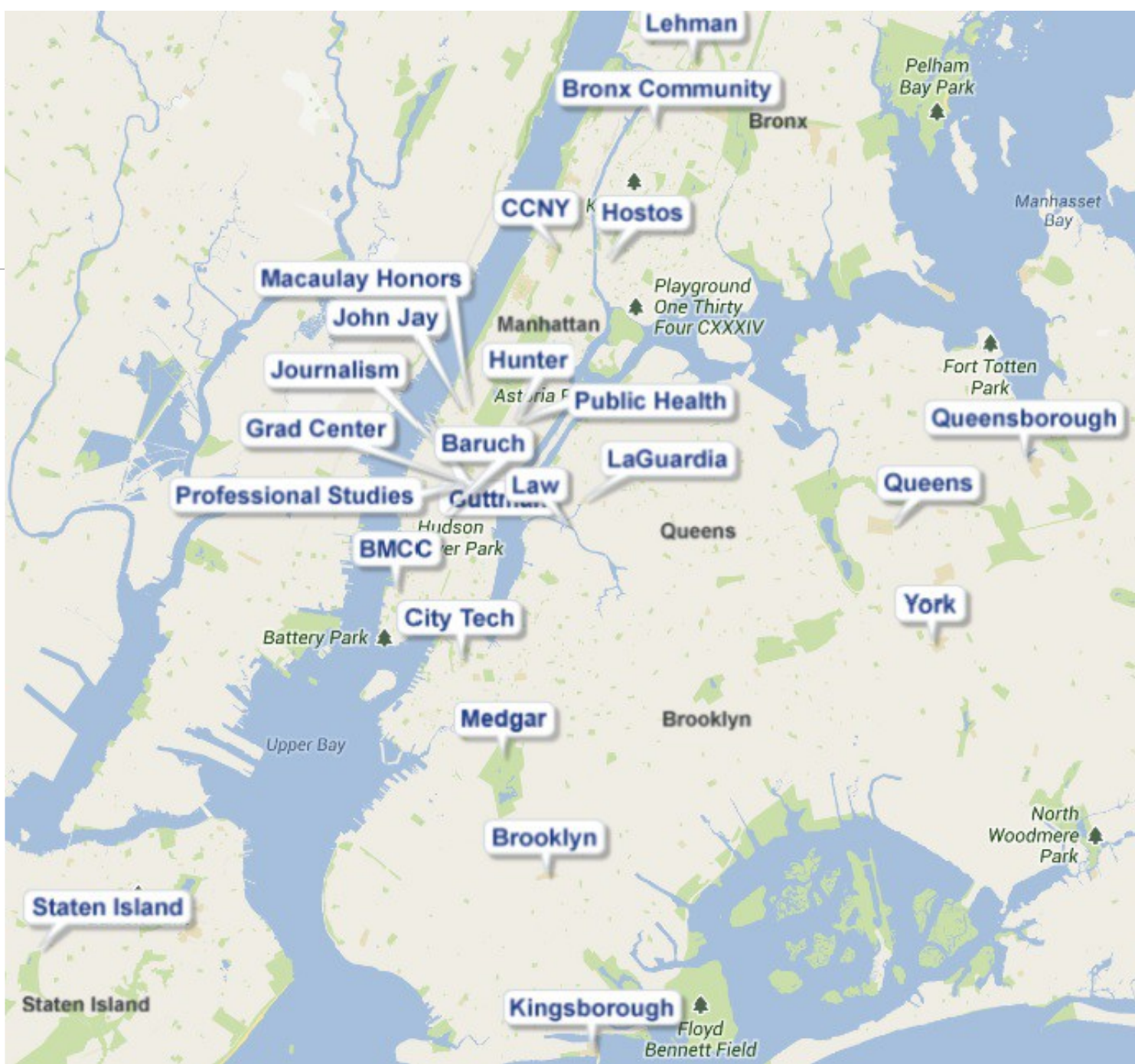
A FOCUS ON EVALUATION

- A significant shift in expectations around quantitative data analysis and reporting

- Availability of rich data sets on programs and students

Development of In-House Evaluation

CUNY'S RESPONSE

- Focused on data and metrics in program development

- Understood and learned from successful evaluation efforts

  - College Now

  - CUNY ASAP

- Highlighted research & evaluation in the strategic planning process

FORMATION OF A RESEARCH & EVALUATION UNIT

- Program cooperation and economies of scale

- Strategic partnership with the CUNY Office of Institutional Research & Assessment

- Flexibility to experiment and collaborate

- Focus on three primary areas:

  - Program evaluation

  - Research

  - Program support

- We don't even have a name yet!

EARLY IN-HOUSE EVALUATION EFFORTS PAID OFF

Since 2001, program directors stressed the importance of accurate data collection and storage

New Directions in Higher Education **Volume**

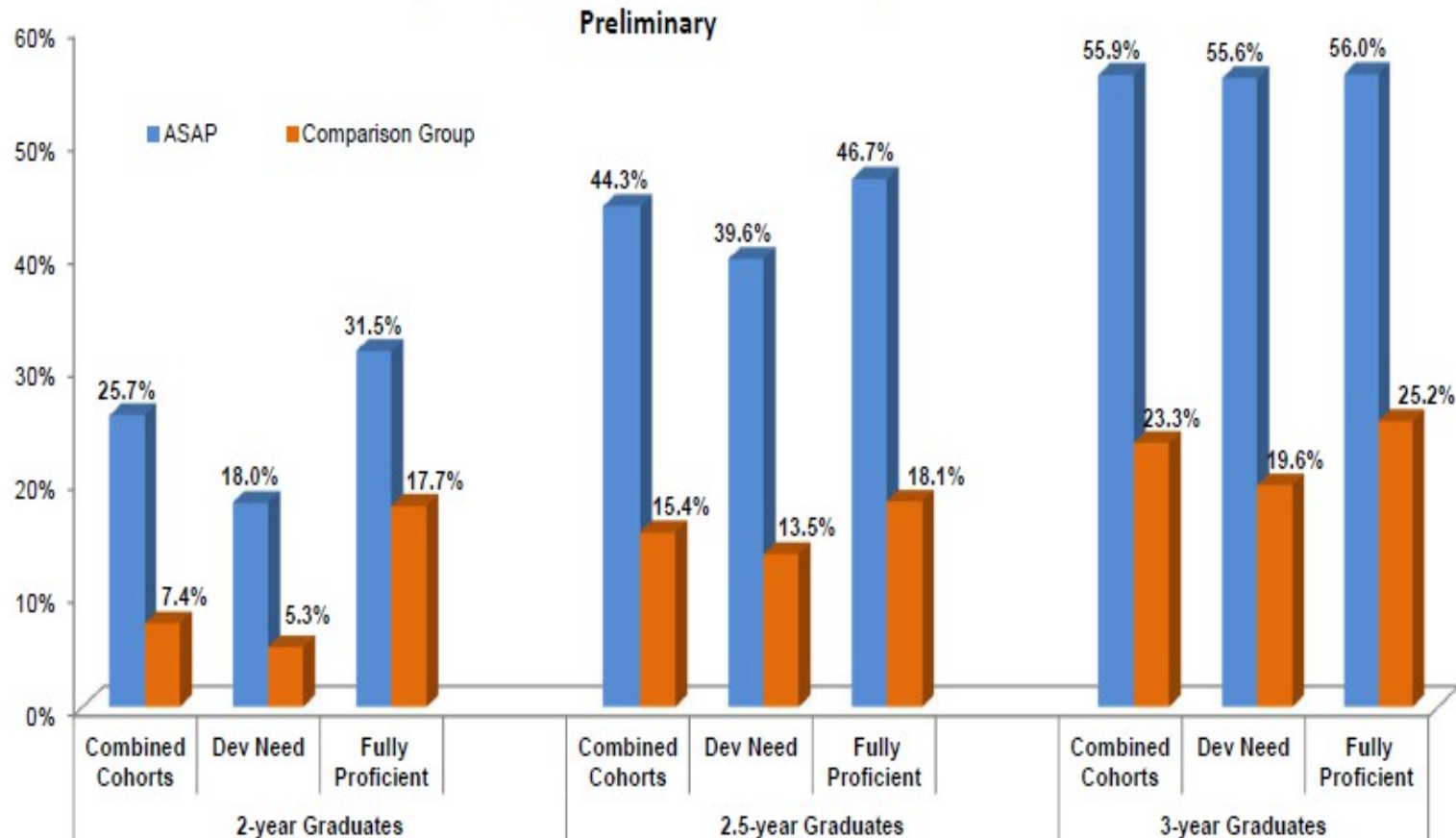# EARLY EVALUATION EFFORTS HAVE PAID OFF

Since inception, ASAP has had a rigorous internal evaluation agenda driven by program leadership
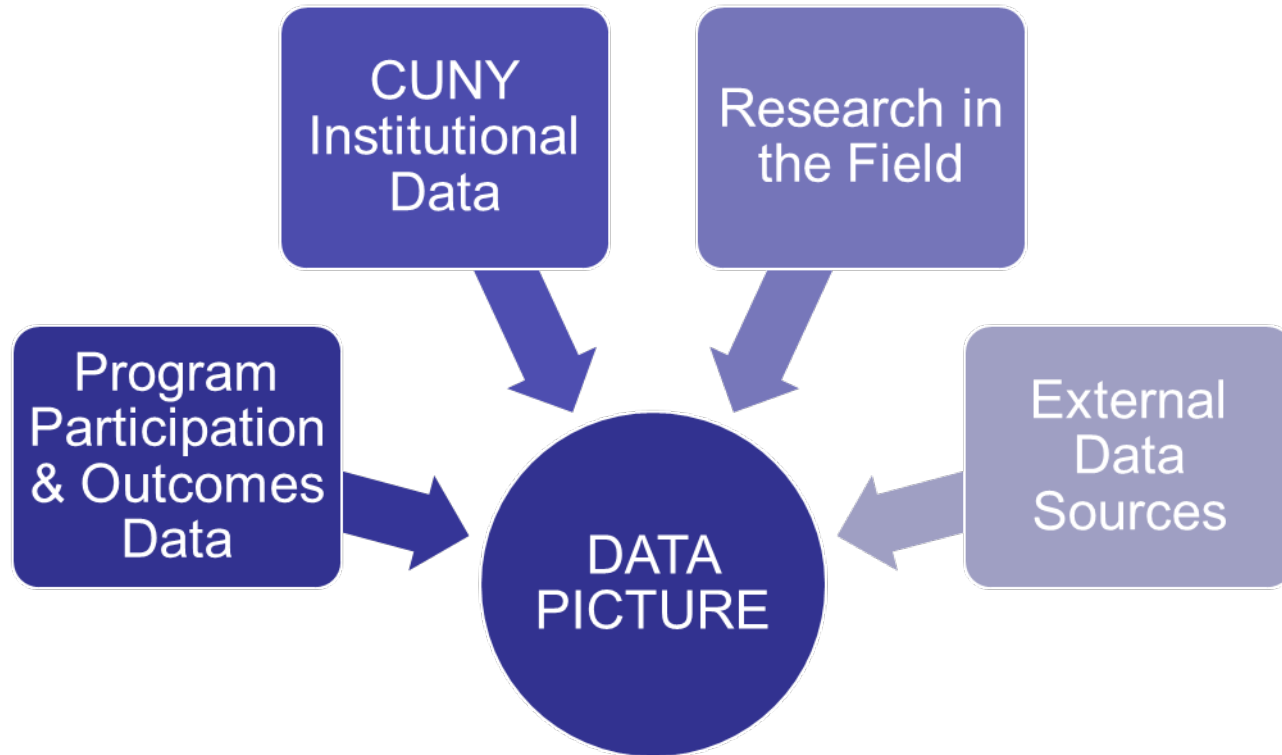
Robust MDRC Study and Significant Program Expansion

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF ASAP HAVE LEAD TO INCREASED ATTENTION TO METRICS AT CUNY

Chart 1: Graduation Rates for Combined ASAP and Comparison Group Cohorts: By Developmental Need at Time of Entry[1]
Preliminary

Source: CUNY Office of Institutional Assessment and ASAP Colleges

A COMPREHENSIVE "DATA PICTURE" OF PROGRAMS

CUNY Institutional Data

Research in the Field

Program Participation & Outcomes Data

DATA PICTURE

External Data Sources

COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE FOR EMPLOYMENT (COPE)

- COPE assists CUNY community college students who are receiving public assistance to help them meet work requirements in order to maintain eligibility for their benefits while pursuing their degrees.

- Evaluation team plays a critical role:

  - Matching data from NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) and CUNY

  - Tracking student progress

  - Understanding and highlighting data to inform program development

CUNY USES DATA TO UNDERSTAND PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Spring 2013 Enrollment Metrics of Students Receiving Public Assistance*

Academic Majors	Students
Liberal Arts	3,121
Criminal Justice	1,178
Nursing	690
Business Admin.	554
Human Services	331
Business Mgmt.	218
Accounting	193
Early Childhood Ed.	120

*At select CUNY community colleges

CUNY USES DATA TO UNDERSTAND PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Spring 2013 Enrollment Metrics of Students Receiving Public Assistance*

Academic Majors	Students	Credit Accumulation
Liberal Arts	3,121	9.69
Criminal Justice	1,178	7.86
Nursing	690	8.41
Business Admin.	554	9.80
Human Services	331	9.21
Business Mgmt.	218	7.01
Accounting	193	8.77
Early Childhood Ed.	120	10.24

*At select CUNY community colleges

CUNY USES DATA TO UNDERSTAND PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Spring 2013 Enrollment Metrics of Students Receiving Public Assistance*

| Academic Majors	Students	Credit Accumulation	% Still Needing Remediation
Liberal Arts	3,121	9.69	78%
Criminal Justice	1,178	7.86	88%
Nursing	690	8.41	76%
Business Admin.	554	9.80	78%
Human Services	331	9.21	88%
Business Mgmt.	218	7.01	82%
Accounting	193	8.77	71%
Early Childhood Ed.	120	10.24	85%

*At select CUNY community colleges

INTERNAL EVALUATION OF *CUNY START*

- CUNY Start is a college bridge program serving students in need of significant remedial needs. CUNY applicants delay CUNY enrollment and instead receive intensive academic instruction and support.

- Evaluation team plays a critical role:

  - Developing rigorous quasi-experimental analysis of CUNY Start

  - Supporting data entry staff through capacity building and feedback loops

  - Providing timely data support for program management

CUNY START STUDENTS ACHIEVED PROFICIENCY AT HIGHER RATES
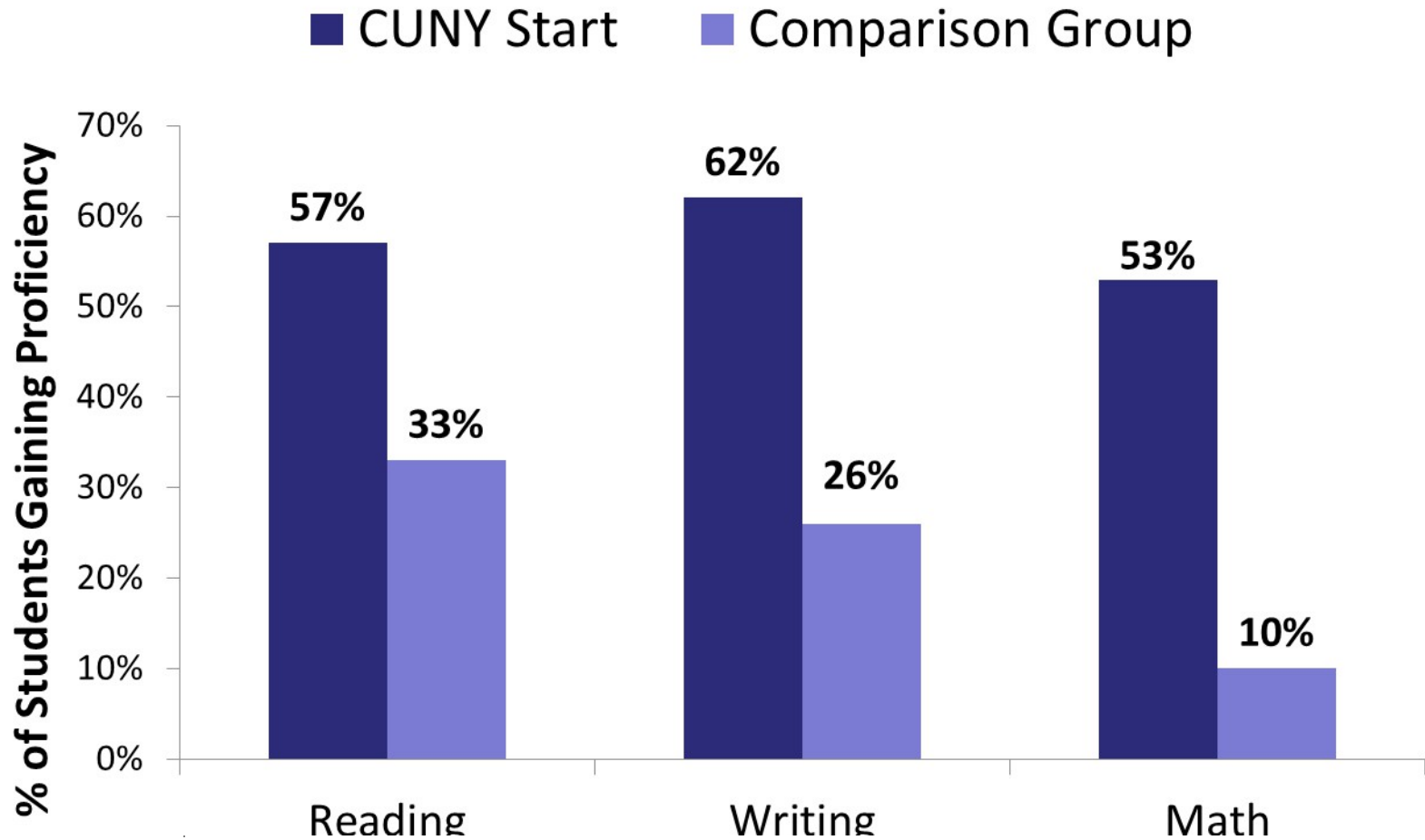
FUTURE PLANS FOR *CUNY START*

- Significant program expansion to serve the majority of CUNY students needing remediation in at least two subject areas

- Discussions with external research partners to carry out a full randomized control trial (RCT) in 2015

- Development of linkages with other CUNY college transition and completion programs

IN-HOUSE EVALUATION: CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

- Keeping the conversation going…

- Short-term versus long-term outcomes

- Standardized data reports for day-to-day decision-making

- Comprehensive evaluation strategy

- Program elements informed by ongoing research in the field

- Research informed by program elements

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