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

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
- External Data Sources
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
### Spring 2013 Enrollment Metrics of Students Receiving Public Assistance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Majors</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
<td>3,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>1,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Admin.</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Mgmt.</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*At select CUNY community colleges*
### Spring 2013 Enrollment Metrics of Students Receiving Public Assistance*

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<tr>
<th>Academic Majors</th>
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<th>Credit Accumulation</th>
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<tr>
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<td>9.69</td>
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<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>1,178</td>
<td>7.86</td>
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<td>Nursing</td>
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<td>8.41</td>
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<td>9.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
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<td>9.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Mgmt.</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>7.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>8.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10.24</td>
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*At select CUNY community colleges
CUNY USES DATA TO UNDERSTAND PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Spring 2013 Enrollment Metrics of Students Receiving Public Assistance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Majors</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Credit Accumulation</th>
<th>% Still Needing Remediation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
<td>3,121</td>
<td>9.69</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>1,178</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<td>690</td>
<td>8.41</td>
<td>76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Mgmt.</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>8.77</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10.24</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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

- **Reading**: 57% (CUNY Start) vs. 33% (Comparison Group)
- **Writing**: 62% (CUNY Start) vs. 26% (Comparison Group)
- **Math**: 53% (CUNY Start) vs. 10% (Comparison Group)
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
CONTACT

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