The trend toward enhanced gender balance, which started in 2009, continued this past year. This trend may reflect internal and/or external factors that disproportionately affect enrollment based on gender, such as contractions in the job market, increased enrollment of veterans, and/or FTE reductions.

Trending Towards Enhanced Gender Balance

The decreased number of sections and increased attentiveness to not exceeding class maximums has resulted in a decrease of 527 students (3.4%) compared to census last year. It is interesting to note, however, that if the growth we had experienced between Fall 2005 and Fall 2009 had not been curtailed, we would have expected a Fall 2012 enrollment of approximately 22,000 students. This means that this fall we have approximately 7,400 fewer students than would have been expected if we were not experiencing budgetary issues.

CRC’s Growth Curtailed

Research Brief

Fall 2005 11632  Fall 2006 12563  Fall 2007 13688  Fall 2008 14518  Fall 2009 16235  Fall 2010 15449  Fall 2011 15120  Fall 2012 14593

Fall 2005 57.9%  Fall 2012 55.8%  Fall 2005 41.7%  Fall 2012 44.2%

CRC’s Growth Curtailed

"By enrolling in college courses, committing to a degree plan, and envisioning long-term objectives that depend on success at the community college, each student had stepped into the roll of a college student. The many students who seriously doubted their ability to succeed, however, were anxiously waiting for their shortcomings to be exposed, at which point they would be stopped from pursuing their goals. Fragile and fearful, these students expressed their concern in several ways; in reference to college professors, particular courses or subject matter, and the entire notion of college itself. At the core of the different expressions of fear, however, were the same feelings of dread and the apprehension that success in college would prove to be an unrealizable dream."

The College Fear Factor
Rebecca Cox.
There has been a dramatic decrease in the percentage of our Hispanic student population this year, and this decrease has been matched by increases within the African-American and Asian Pacific Islander student population. In addition, despite the recent changes which provided students with the opportunity to declare multiple ethnicities and/or to identify specific ethnic backgrounds within the larger categories, an increasing percentage of our students are selecting other/unknown ethnicity. This may reflect that the complexity of our diversity extends beyond the type and number of categories listed on the application.

Almost 63% of CRC’s Fall 2012 student population have incomes and household sizes that are classified as poverty or low income, an increase of 2.5% compared to Fall 2011. In 2012 the Department of Health and Human Services defined a household of one person with an income of less than $11,170 as poverty level. A family of four with income less than $23,050 would also be classified as poverty level. Low-income threshold levels are approximately 1.5 times the poverty level.

Colleges Need to Innovate to Support Diverse Students

- Use information and new technology to pinpoint when students are having problems in courses and relay that directly to students to help them get the resources they need.
- Explain to students why it is important to achieve certain key competencies, such as the ability to write, calculate numbers, and understand the global community.
- Improve alignment of K-12 and college curricula and counseling.
- Transform transfer policies so students are more easily able to easily transfer from one institution to another.
- Create pathways where students can easily step in and out of school and no longer think of it as a failure.
- Revamp remedial programs since they are the “Bermuda Triangle” of higher education.
- Just as the K-12 sector has focused on teacher quality, higher education should look at improving the teaching ability of faculty members.
- Think more broadly about what strengths students should have coming into college—rather than looking at a narrow set of academic skills.

93rd annual meeting of the American Council on Education
Slightly more than 42% of CRC students have parents who have not attended college. CRC continues to have the highest proportion of first-generation students in the District. Interestingly, the course success and persistence rates of our first-generation students are comparable to students who are not first-generation.

To help first-generation students be successful, it is important to understand the challenges they may face.

- A first-generation student is more likely to be older, have a lower socioeconomic status, have a family, and attend school part-time (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).
- This kind of student is also more likely to commute to campus and thus is often less involved in campus life (Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004).
- In addition, first-generation students may feel guilty about attending college because of the financial strain it places on their families (Sickles, 2004).

Suggestions for meeting the needs of Millennial students:

- Develop campus rituals and traditions to build sense of community;
- Explain issues such as academic integrity, intellectual ownership, cheating;
- Provide clear expectations, detailed instructions and explicit syllabi;
- Offer mental health counseling and support;
- Provide time management, study skills and conflict resolution training;
- Plan opportunities for parental involvement;
- Offer career planning that stresses the long term over the short term;
- Provide internship opportunities;
- Provide cutting-edge technology, interactive web services and an infrastructure for virtual communities; and
- Offer additional technological support for Millennials who are first-generation students.

This graph shows the continued growth in the percentage of students at CRC who are 40 years of age and older, a trend that has been true over the past several years. The slight decrease in students between the ages of 18-20 most likely reflects the reduction in course offerings combined with registration priorities. Currently more than 73% of our students are under the age of 30!
This fact also explains why the total number of students served by the college each academic year is approximately 1.4 times our fall enrollment. Persistence reflects a variety of factors, including academic success, financial and life stability, access to necessary classes, and lack of access to a transfer institution.

Spring course success rates declined in 2008 to 64.3% and remained at that level until last year, when they improved to 67.5%. This trend has been maintained this year. Spring 2012 course success rates are 2.1% more than Spring 2007 and 3.2% more than Spring 2010 success rates.

The percentage of students who attend CRC during a given fall term and enroll in the subsequent spring term has been increasing for the most part since 2001. CRC’s persistence rates are traditionally greater than the other LRCCD schools. It should be noted that a 63.9% persistence rate means that in spring close to 40% of our students are new to the college or are prior CRC students who have taken a leave of absence. This fact also explains why the total number of students served by the college each academic year is approximately 1.4 times our fall enrollment. Persistence reflects a variety of factors, including academic success, financial and life stability, access to necessary classes, and lack of access to a transfer institution.