



# CAFE NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 2 | January 2019

## Student Retention and Completion – it is Everyone’s Job

**30 minutes** the number of minutes a student spends with an advisor per term.\*

**2430 minutes** the number of minutes a student spends with a single faculty member per term.\*\*

**Your voice and relationship** with each student is critical in the **retention of students** and in their **program completion**. This newsletter shares several concrete techniques that you can implement in your classroom during a few

\*Based on a student meeting once a term with an advisor.

\*\*Based on a course with 3 contact hours.

of those valuable minutes to support students in course and program completion! Investigate additional ideas in the White Paper Edited by Bonnie Snyder, 2010 cited at the end of this article.

As shown in Figure 1, the pool from which Schoolcraft College draws its traditional-age students is projected to continue to shrink at a steady rate. This makes it critical for us to retain the students we have and recruit from other student pools.

### Traditional-age college student pipeline continues to shrink

- Nationally: Projected 2% decrease in the total number of high school graduates between 2009-10 and 2022-23
- Regionally: The outlook for the Northeast and Midwest is bleaker; projected 17% decline in number of Michigan public high school graduates

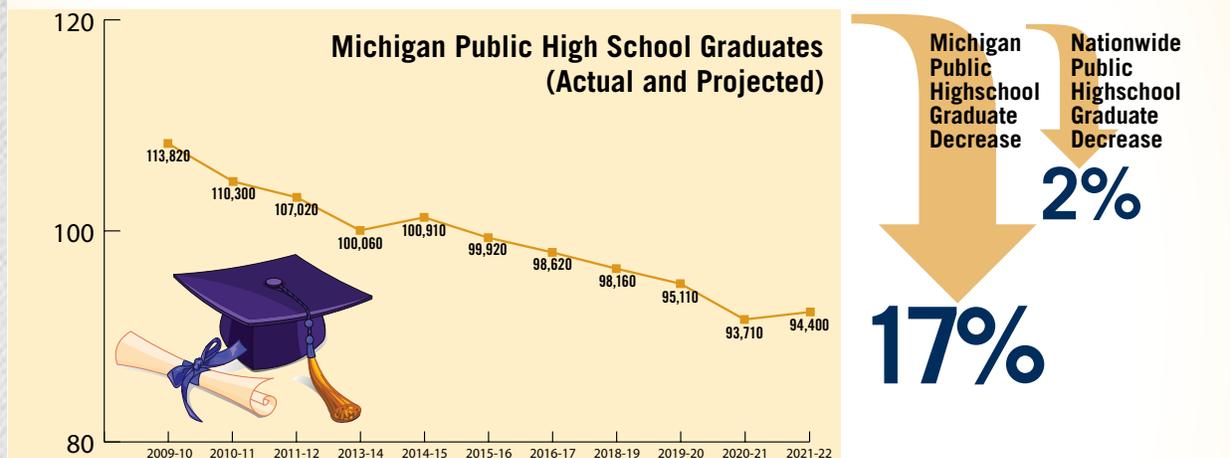


Figure 1: Graphic from Schoolcraft College Office of Strategic Enrollment Management, 2015.



**Schoolcraft College**

## In this issue

Student Retention and Completion – it is Everyone’s Job . . . . .	1
Average Earnings in Wayne County . . . . .	2
Know your students . . . . .	3
Aiding Students with Time Management. . . . .	5
Understanding Schoolcraft College Program Options and How Courses We Teach Fit Into the Puzzle . . . . .	6
Learning about Career Opportunities in your Subject Area . . . . .	7
Learning about Program Options at Schoolcraft College within your Subject Area . . . . .	8
Is the Liberal Arts course I teach transferable? . . . . .	9
What Occupational Programs does my Liberal Arts course support?. . . . .	9
Academic Rigor and its Impact on Student Retention . . . . .	10
Resources . . . . .	14
Professional Development Opportunities. . . . .	15



### Schoolcraft College Board of Trustees

Brian D. Broderick . . . . .	Chair
Carol M. Strom . . . . .	Vice Chair
Gretchen Alaniz . . . . .	Secretary
Dillon E. Breen . . . . .	Trustee
William P. Erwin, Jr. . . . .	Trustee
Joan A. Gebhardt . . . . .	Trustee
Terry Gilligan . . . . .	Trustee
Conway A. Jeffress, Ph.D., President	

In addition, student completion of a certificate and/or degree at Schoolcraft College is beneficial for both the student and the College. As you can see in Figure 2, earning an associate’s degree can

significantly impact a student’s earning potential. The College benefits through “bragging rights” regarding graduation rates which attracts more students. This is a win-win situation!

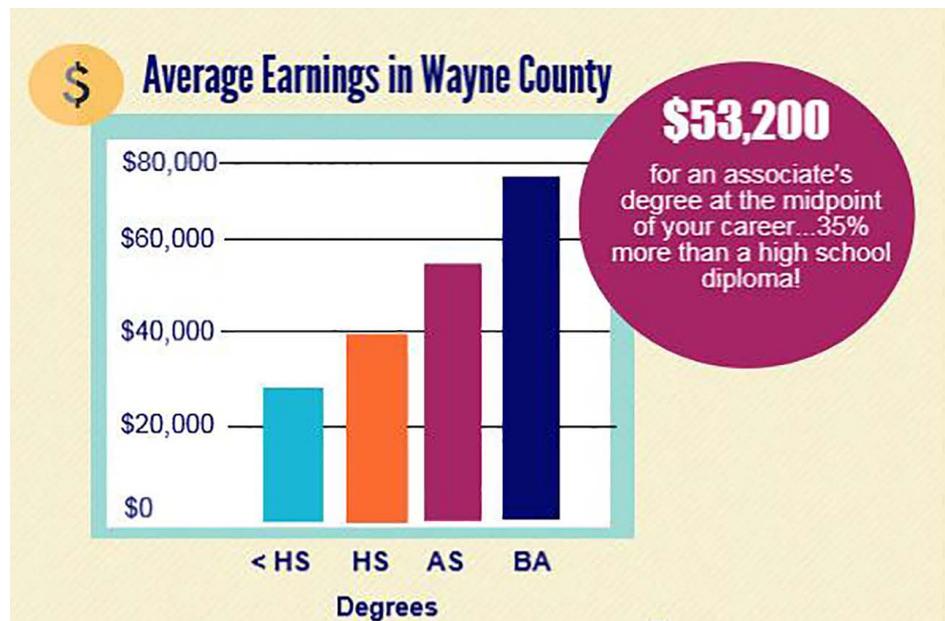


Figure 2: Graphic from Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, 2015.

\*Based on a student meeting once a term with an advisor.

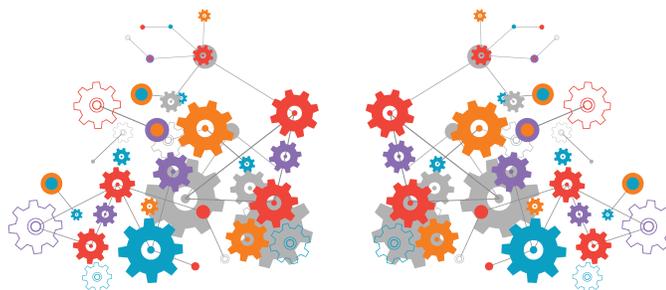
\*\*Based on a course with 3 contact hours.

### Works Cited

Schoolcraft College Office of Strategic Enrollment Management. (2015). *Data Point* (Nov. 2015 ed.). Livonia, MI: Author. Retrieved from: [U:\SEM \(strategic enrollment management\)\Data Point documents](U:\SEM (strategic enrollment management)\Data Point documents).

Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2015). *Student Support and ROI Infographic* (Sept. 2015 ed.). Livonia, MI: Author. Retrieved from <U:\Institutional Research\Marketing Research\Data Bites Newsletters>.

Snyder B., Editor. (2010). *What Faculty Members Need to Know About Retention*. A Manga Publications White Paper. Retrieved from <https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/231350.pdf>.



# Know your students



There are many ways you can get to know the students in your classroom and take advantage of this for learning purposes while aiding retention! “A substantial body of research, conducted over more than 50 years, makes clear that faculty-student interaction is a key factor in promoting student success, particularly among those students who most need support, such as first-generation college students and students of color... The host of positive outcomes includes increased persistence and completion rates, better grades and standardized test scores, and the development of leadership, critical thinking, sense of worth, career and graduate school aspiration, and self-confidence...Of these, persistence toward degree completion is one of the strongest.” (kezar and Maxey, 2014).

Here is one idea of how to get to know students from the first day. We are all familiar with the ice-breaker where students are asked questions and based upon their answer they go to different parts of the room. Although it is fun to know if students prefer Pop or Country music, or how many are left handed, there are many questions that we can ask that will help us to connect with our students on deeper academic level and gain valuable teaching information. Students appreciate being heard!

Here are some example questions. Once you read a few it will be easy to come up with your own that apply to your content area:

- If you prefer written assignments go to the left side of the room. If you prefer giving presentations go to the right side of the room. If you prefer artistic expression go to the back of the room. If you have another preference please go to the front of the room and share your ideas with the class. *Have those students share their ideas. Incorporate options of final project format into assignments if possible. The same rubric can often be utilized for different assessment formats.*
  - If you prefer large group discussions go to the left side of the room. If you prefer small group discussions go to the right side of the room. If you prefer lecture go to the front of the room. *Have each group come up with two reasons why they selected their location and have a spokesperson share the information. Your students can reflect on their preferences and you may be able to incorporate formats that the majority prefer in some instances.*
  - If you prefer to do reading assignments on the computer go to the left side of the room. If you prefer to do reading assignments using a paper or book go to the right side of the room. *Follow up with: if you are asked not only to read, but to annotate the reading would they switch groups? We often print out reams of materials only to find most of it in the recycling bin. Today's students may be very satisfied with an electronic version of materials and are fully capable of utilizing the annotating tools.*
- This is an 8 a.m. class. If you choose this section because you are a morning person go to the left side of the room. If you only choose this section because it is what fit into your schedule go to the right side of the room. *In your group brainstorm two class related things that will get you out of bed and to class on time. Use the student feedback to get students to class on time! If they perceive that you are only going to lecture and post the Power-Point on Blackboard, they may not see value in attending.*
  - If you prefer multiple-choice test questions go to the left side of the room. If you prefer open-ended test questions go to the right side of the room. *Work in groups of three. Within your group write a question (of the type you indicated) asking about the main objective of this course. Include the answer. Following the sharing out, discuss which types of questions are easier to write. Which are easier to answer? Which do they feel the instructor gains more insight of the students' skills with? Did they answer all parts of their open-ended question?*

continued on p. 4



# Know your students (cont.)



- If you took this class because it is required for your program, go to the left side of the room. If you took this class because you wanted to, go to the right side of the room. If you took this course for both of those reasons, go to the back of the room. Then ask the students to share which program has this course as a requirement. If the course wasn't a requirement, ask them why they selected the course. What was their motivation to be there?

In addition to the questions stated, occupational classrooms might try this question.

- If you are interested in a career in XX, go to the left side of the room. If you are interested in a career in YY, go to the right side of the room. If you're hoping to transfer to a university to continue your education, go to the back of the room. These may be different occupations within

your program. Have the students in each group come up with 2-3 job responsibilities they feel they would have in this type of job. Transfer students would need to learn about articulation opportunities in your program or explore if this course will transfer otherwise.

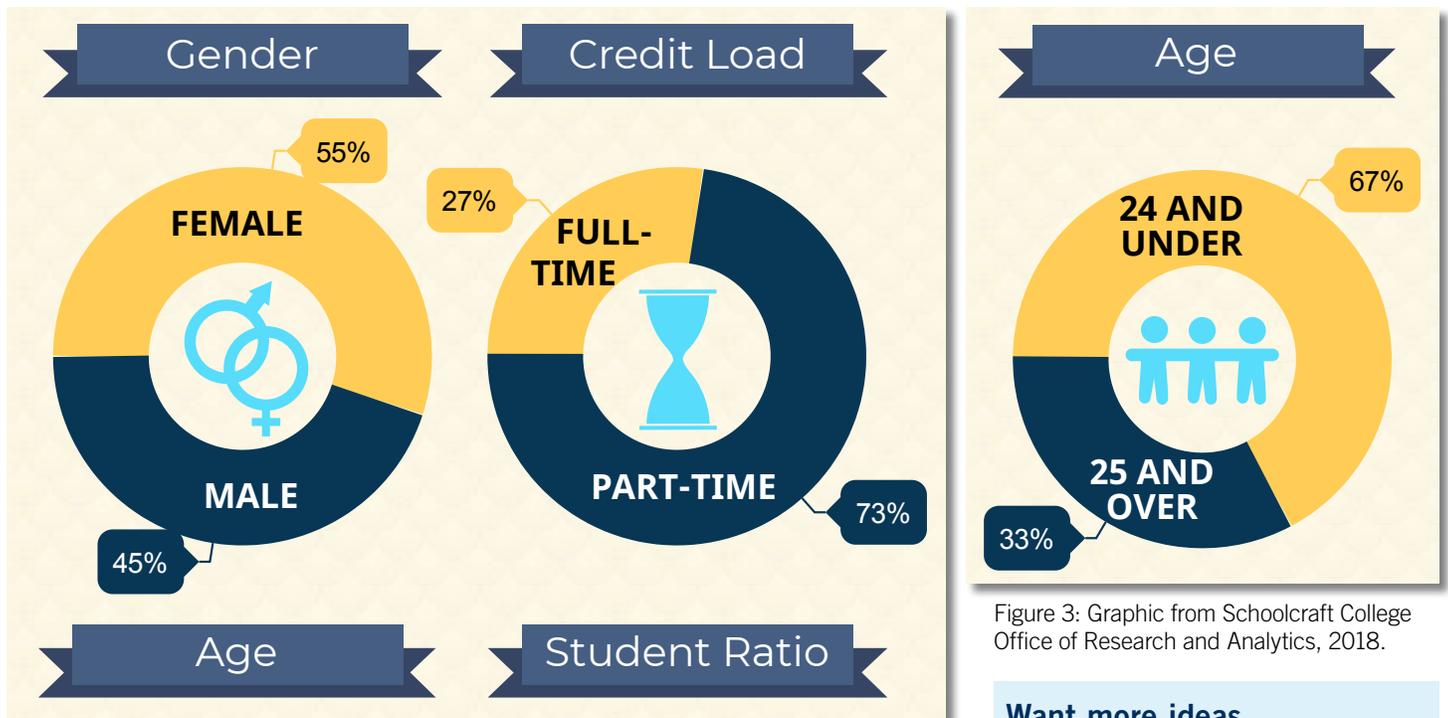


Figure 3: Graphic from Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, 2018.

## Works Cited

Gonzalez J. (July 10, 2016). *A 4-Part System for Getting to Know Your Students*. Cult of Pedagogy. Retrieved from <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/relationship-building/>.

Kezar A, and Maxey D. (Fall 2014) *Faculty Matter: So Why Doesn't Everyone Think So?* The NEA Higher Education Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/e-Kezar.pdf>.

Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2018). *Data Bites* (Nov. 2018 ed.). Livonia, MI: Author. Retrieved from <U:\Institutional Research\Marketing Research\Data Bites Newsletters>.



## Want more ideas for assignments?

If you would like to see other faculty members' assignments, please go to Assignment Central found on the **SC Assignment Central Blackboard Organization**.

## Creating a Student Survey

If you would like ideas on creating a student survey, please see the article by Gonzalez (2016).

<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/relationship-building/>

# Aiding Students with Time Management

Every year Schoolcraft College administers a government mandated survey to credit students who left during the prior year, did not submit for a credential, and did not enroll in the following fall semester. The data gathered is a great learning opportunity for all!

There are several things that faculty can do in the classroom related to these survey results. Two items are shown in the sidebar. This article discusses a third, the balancing act students have between work and school, and how faculty can help.

65% of the students surveyed work an average of 21+ hours per week and many indicated one of their main obstacles to success is time management. (Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, 2017-2018). There are many things that an Instructor can do to aid students with time management. Below are classroom organizational tools that will help students budget their time:

- Instructors, make sure that you fill out the “Schedule” at the end of the syllabus in as much detail as possible - and stick to the plan so that students know what to expect!

- Remind students that the syllabus states, “Budget your time to keep up with the course work. At least two hours of study time outside of class for each hour the class meets is recommended.” If they do not have this amount of time in their daily schedule, make sure they are creating a plan to avoid the potential consequences. Kent (2018) outlines how to help students with this aspect of time management in her article entitled *Teaching Students to Manage Their Time*.
- For all large assignments, include at least one small point value “check point” along the way. This helps motivate students to start projects before the last minute deadline and gives them opportunities to ask questions or get clarification.
- Develop rubrics for all major assignments so that students have a clear picture of what they need to be doing and how many points each part is worth. You can see examples of rubrics in the *Integrating Excellence in Teaching and Learning Handbook* found on WebAdvisor under the Faculty menu or here: [M:\Curriculum Development\CC Handbook and Forms\Handbooks](#). (OCA, 2018)

- Set up a Blackboard account for your class for easy communication and access to graded updates.
- Give students a reason to attend EVERY class period by making the class engaging and sharing your excitement for this knowledge!

## More Information from the Non-returning Student Survey Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics (2017-2018).

37% of these non-returning students stated they transferred to another college to pursue a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree. *In your class, express the importance of obtaining a credential from Schoolcraft College prior to transferring to obtain a Bachelor’s degree. They need to talk with their advisor to be sure they’re making the right choice!*

13% of students left due to work schedule conflicts with class time availability. 45% indicated they would appreciate more class time/availability. *Survey your students to see when the best time of day is for courses in your subject area and share this information with administration.*

## Works Cited

Jacobs L. F. and Hyman J.S. (October 14, 2009). *Top 12 Time Management Tips*. Retrieved from U.S. News and World Report <https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2009/10/14/top-12-time-management-tips>.

Kent C. (September 18, 2018). *Teaching Students to Manage Their Time*. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2018/09/18/how-teach-students-time-management-skills-opinion>.

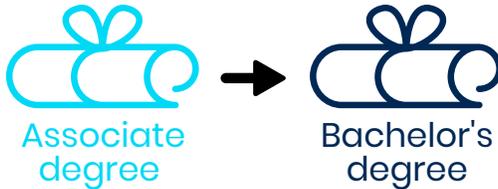
Operations, Curriculum and Assessment (OCA). (August 2018). *Integrating Excellence in Teaching and Learning*. Livonia, MI: Author. Retrieved from [M:\Curriculum Development\CC Handbook and Forms\Handbooks](#).

Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2018). *Data Bites School Daze Edition* (Sept. 2018 ed.). Livonia, MI: Author. Retrieved from [U:\Institutional Research\Marketing Research\Data Bites Newsletters](#).

Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2017-2018). *Non-Returning Student Survey Results* (2017-2018 ed.) Livonia, MI: Author. Retrieved from [U:\Institutional Research\Marketing Research\Data Bites Newsletters](#).

## Why earn an associate degree before transferring to a 4-year?

**49%** more likely to earn a bachelor's degree within 4 years



Source: Earning an Associate Degree Before Transfer Boosts Students' Likelihood of Earning Four-Year Degree; Community College Research Center

Figure 4: Graphic from Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, 2018.

**Top 12 Time-Management Tips.** Share the link below with your students. The article by Jacobs and Hyman (2009) gives tips on the advantages of scheduling your courses in blocks, understanding your own study style, the importance of doing your work correctly the first time and many more! <https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2009/10/14/top-12-time-management-tips>.

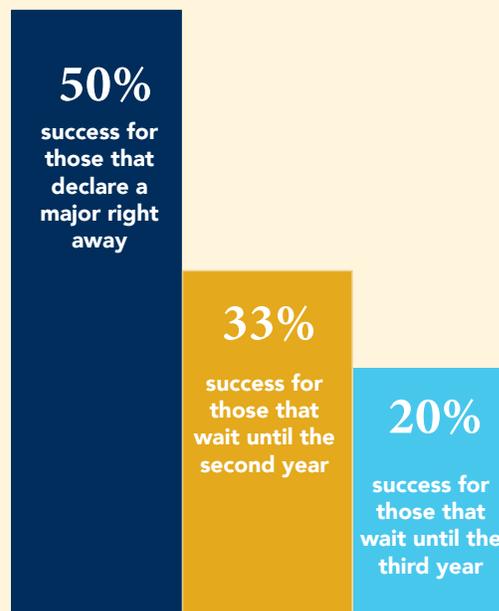
# Understanding Schoolcraft College Program Options and How Courses We Teach Fit Into the Puzzle

As indicated in Figure 5, data shows that students who select a program to work towards early in their community college experience are far more successful at degree completion. As we have learned, degree completion is beneficial for the student and the College! There are several ways in which a classroom instructor can engage students with this selection early on. The Curriculum Designers in *Operations Curriculum and Assessment (OCA)* are also available to attend one of your department meetings, to share Program Specific information with your team of Instructors. Contact [oca@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:oca@schoolcraft.edu) to set up an appointment.

## Pick Your Program and Pick it Fast

**30%** of all community college students graduate or transfer to a university (within 6 years)

**45%** of community college students don't know their major during their first semester.



New studies discovered that you can dramatically improve your chances of success by choosing a career path and program – and the sooner the better! The good news is that no matter what your background or level of academic preparation, picking a program has a huge positive impact!

1. Identify goals, interests, strengths and weaknesses.
2. See the Career Services Office to get help with this. They can help you with personality, strengths and interest inventories that can recommend potential careers that could be a good fit for YOU. Think about future employment potential for pathways you are considering:
  - What's the long-term employment outlook?
  - What kind of jobs would that pathway qualify you for?
  - How much education would it require?
  - Does this fit with your strengths, interests, goals and desired lifestyle?
  - What are the potential earnings?

Data sources:

1. "Entering a Program: Helping Students Make Academic and Career Decisions," by the Community College Research Center
2. "Get with the Program...and Finish It: Building Guided Pathways to Accelerate Student Completion," by the Community College Research Center
3. "Get with the Program: Accelerating Community College Students' Entry into and Completion of Programs of Study," by the Community College Research Center.
4. Early Career Focus Improves Community College Completion

Figure 5: Graphic from Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, 2015.

# Learning about Career Opportunities in your Subject Area

Career Coach is a free online career exploration tool for current and prospective students, alumni and community members. Utilizing this tool, students can assess their interests, examine jobs in career areas identified and explore the program options offered by Schoolcraft College that meet their needs. Take a few minutes to use Career Coach ([www.schoolcraft.edu/careerservices](http://www.schoolcraft.edu/careerservices)) to explore careers in the area you teach! If you have questions regarding navigation or desire tips on utilizing the data with students please contact Career Services.

If you teach an introductory course within your program, some students may already be committed to the subject area whereas others may still be in the exploration phase. Sharing information about potential job opportunities upon degree completion may be beneficial. Utilize Career Coach with your students to explore job skills and tasks that a student would do on a daily basis in this type of career or find them and share them with your students.

If you teach a higher-level course in your program it may be benefi-

cial to take a few minutes to more fully explore the tool live with your students in class. Focus on exploring job titles, job requirements, and degree requirements for these jobs (in some cases students may need additional training to obtain their desired career). This information will get them excited about the career possibilities and hopefully help them understand the importance of certificate/degree completion. When sharing this information it is critical that you also understand what options Schoolcraft College offers in your program area - the next topic!

**Career Coach Update**

Career Coach is a free online career exploration tool for current and prospective students, alumni and community members.

[www.schoolcraft.edu/careerservices](http://www.schoolcraft.edu/careerservices)

Take a 6 or 60 question personality assessment to identify interests

**ASSESS**

Review your potential matches based on the quiz and examine which may be a good fit

**EXPLORE**

Find the right career using real-time data on wages, job growth, tasks, job postings, skills and employers specific to the Metro Detroit region

**DISCOVER**

Examine the programs that will provide the right training for the career you want

**CONNECT**

CHARTING A PATHWAY

Figure 6: Graphic from Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, 2018 (Career Coach News Update).



# Learning about Program Options at Schoolcraft College within your Subject Area

As classroom instructors, we often focus exclusively on our course content. Let's take a moment to look at the bigger picture of a student's success at the College. Schoolcraft College offers over 100 Skills Certificates, Certificates, Associate's and Bachelor's degrees. For most students, one of these options is their end goal. It is critical that each classroom instructor understands how their course fits into this goal.

If you do not already know about the program options, we recommend starting with the big picture for your exploration. On the Schoolcraft College website, navigate to "Academics" then to "Areas of Study". This page will give you a broad overview of the subject areas in which Schoolcraft College offers certificates and degrees. Select the Area of Study in which your program lies. Before delving into your specific subject area, it is valuable to become aware of associated program offerings at the College. For example, if you teach in Advanced Manufacturing, knowing that we also offer certificates and degrees in numerous other Manufacturing and Technology areas is beneficial.

Once you have selected your program area, the credential options and their associated course requirements can be seen. Make note of any credentials that are "stackable". This means that all of the credits you earn in the Skills Certificate count towards the Certificate or Associate's degree. Completion of credentials along the way is

valuable for both the student and the College so is important information to communicate to the student.

After surveying the full program(s), locate the course(s) you teach within the program. By selecting a course you can gain additional valuable information that is also found on the syllabus. Make sure you explore the requisites to your course and what subsequent courses your course may be a requisite for.

This is a great starting point! If however you are hungry for more information about how your course benefits students, such as what Program Outcomes it supports, or what other programs outside your area may require your course, or more details about the requisites please contact Operations Curriculum and Assessment (OCA) for additional information at [oca@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:oca@schoolcraft.edu).

Now that you have gained this important perspective, what should you share with your students?

- A "You Are Here" map of the full program and how your course fits into their goal may be beneficial at the start of the term. This is beneficial for both introductory and advanced courses.

- Make sure students are aware of any available "Stackable Credentials" and the benefits of their completion.
- During the start of registration times (March and October) alert students to course offerings in your subject area in the coming terms that will lead towards their program completion. This information can be found here: <http://www.schoolcraft.edu/course-schedules/A-Z>
  - o If any courses in your program are offered through Distance Education they will be indicated on the schedule. This is a great opportunity that students may not be aware of, so take a moment to point them out! Currently only 38% of our students take advantage of distance education (see the sidebar for more information).
  - o Now is a good time to find out if students are dropping out at this point due the courses they need next either not being offered in the coming term or only being offered at times they are unavailable. Communicate any information you discover to your Department Chair or Representative or Instructional Administrator.

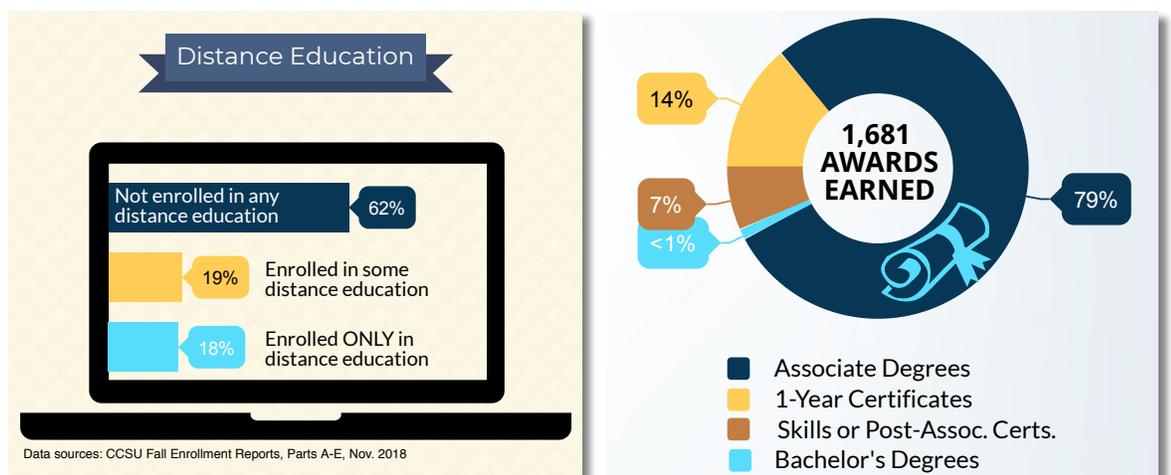


Figure 7: Graphics from Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, Nov. 2018 (Data Bite).

# Is the Liberal Arts course I teach transferable?

Every course offered at Schoolcraft College has a purpose. Learning about the purpose of the course(s) you teach will help you to better inform students of their options. Every Associate's Degree at Schoolcraft College requires completion of general education courses. These requirements can be found here: <http://www.schoolcraft.edu/academics/general-education-requirements>

Examine the chart and find the courses you teach, along with other options that students have. Some of the courses are highlighted with an "M" subscript. This means that in addition to count-

ing towards Schoolcraft College General Education, they are also part of the Michigan Transfer Agreement. The Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) was designed to identify general education courses that will be accepted for transfer at participating two and four year institutions within Michigan. In addition, if a student completes a designated combination of MTA approved courses (with or without their Associate's degree) they earn an MTA Endorsement on their transcript so have satisfied the general education requirements of participating institutions. Additional details about the

MTA endorsement requirements can be found here: <http://www.schoolcraft.edu/academics/michigan-transfer-agreement>

Share with your students how the course you teach fits into their career goals and responsibilities as a citizen. They may not understand the value of taking a specific subject area that doesn't seem necessary to their objective, so take a few minutes to offer an explanation or explore the benefits.



## What Occupational Programs does my Liberal Arts course support?

Every Associate's degree at Schoolcraft College has general education course requirements. In the occupational programs, some of the courses are open for student's choice, where in other cases a specific general education course is required for graduation, as they are integral to

that area of study. Take a moment to look at the 2018-2019 Course Program Cross Reference Chart (CPCRC) found here: [M:\Curriculum Development\Course Program Cross Reference Chart](#) to determine if the course(s) you teach are required in any specific Occupational Programs.

### Works Cited

Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2018). *Career Coach News Update*. Livonia MI: Author. Retrieved from [U:\Institutional Research\Marketing Research\Data Bites Newsletters](#).

Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2015). *Data Bites* (May 2015 ed.). Livonia, MI: Author. Retrieved from [U:\Institutional Research\Marketing Research\Data Bites Newsletters](#).

Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2018). *Data Bite* (Nov. 2018 ed.). Livonia MI: Author. Retrieved from [U:\Institutional Research\Marketing Research\Data Bites Newsletters](#).

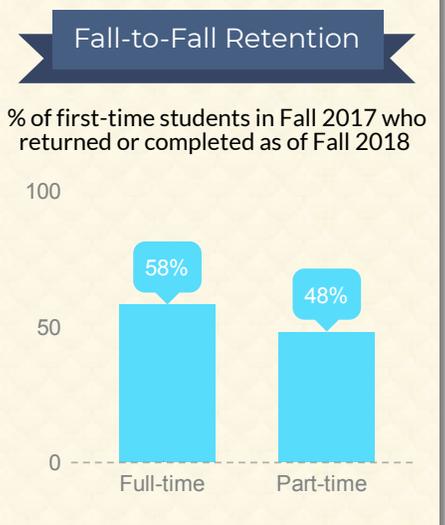


Figure 8: Graphic from Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, Nov. 2018 (Data Bite).



# Academic Rigor and its Impact on Student Retention

There is often a perception that students want to take the easy path and escape hard work in their academic pursuits. A common belief is that when students are expected to work hard, put forth effort, and think critically, they often will give up and either accept a lower grade in a class, or even dropout or stop-out of college to avoid the rigorous tasks and requirements associated with successfully completing a curriculum of study. But, is that the reality?

This article will take a brief look at the issue of academic rigor – what it means, how it impacts student persistence or retention, and how it can be easily integrated into existing courses in an appropriate manner.

## What is academic rigor?

Academic rigor can be thought of in different ways, and will have different meanings for various stakeholders. College students, administrators, and faculty will cite diverse meanings of the term rigor, dependent on their own lens and situation. For example, students might describe rigor based on how much time is required of them to acquire the skills and knowledge to pass a course, while faculty might consider the depth of information to learn and/or the types of learning activities involved. In a broader view, “community colleges and technical training institutions aim to fulfill their historic mission to bring education to all, including a wave of nontraditional students who have delayed entry to school, work full-time, attend classes on a part-time basis, or care for dependents. Rigor in this context could mean teaching specific skills for a job in the local economy or preparing students through remediation for transition to a four-year institution”

(Choy, 2002; Loss 2012 as cited by Francis, 2018, p. 26).

Academic rigor is comprised of many elements, including course workload; the types of questions asked during class, in homework tasks, and on examinations; the types and amount of homework, exams, papers, or projects assigned; and the nature of grading (Braxton & Francis, 2018; Gordon & Palmon, 2010). Nordvall and Braxton (as cited by Braxton and Francis, 2018) define academic rigor simply as the required level of understanding of course content. This level of understanding can range from the lower end of *recall and recognition to the higher end of analysis and synthesis*. The higher the expected level of understanding, the greater the academic rigor.

Rigorous instruction is a key component of the transformational learning experiences associated with the over-arching college experience. It can help to engage learners, foster critical thinking, encourage problem solving, and support the overall growth and development of students.

## Academic rigor at Schoolcraft

Within Schoolcraft’s Performance Based Learning (PBL) environment, Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning is used to promote the higher levels of thinking often associated with academic rigor. Although Bloom’s hierarchy includes six levels: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create (Armstrong, 2018), Schoolcraft faculty are encouraged to aim all instruction at the “Apply” level or above to encourage the development of higher-order thinking in students. PBL also includes an emphasis on real-world types of

assessments which not only help to prepare students for their future careers, but also make the instructional process more rigorous due to the need for critical thinking and active problem solving to complete these types of assessments.

In addition, emphasis on the development of skills associated with the eight Schoolcraft core abilities provides another avenue to support student growth in higher-level reasoning. Many Schoolcraft College courses, including all of those in the English, natural sciences, and social science disciplines, incorporate instruction and assessment of students’ abilities to think creatively and/or critically. In addition, all transfer and occupational programs at Schoolcraft include at least one course which addresses the development of students’ ability to think creatively and/or critically.

## How does academic rigor impact student retention?

Colleges seek to support students so that they can be successful in their academic and career goals. An essential component of student success is persistence to graduation (Braxton and Francis, 2018). There is both anecdotal evidence as well as hard research to disprove the belief that students leave college because of rigor or high expectations of faculty or an institution. In reality, there is confirmation that students want to be challenged in their academic coursework.

According to Weimer (2016), “(t) here’s research on hard and easy courses that’s relevant here, most of which gives students more credit than many faculty do. Students do not prefer easy classes.” Braxton (as cited by Francis, 2018) also states

that students do not leave college due to rigorous coursework.

Students want to be academically challenged and will rise to meet high levels of learning expectations. According to Martin et al. (as cited by Weimer, 2016), STEM students prefer hard classes over easy ones, and use terms such as “challenging” and “demanding” to describe their preferred courses. Braxton and Francis (2018) found that students who encountered higher-level questions on course exams were more likely to persist in their studies than students who encountered lower-level questions. Further evidence comes from psychology professors Johnson and Beck at Appalachian State University. They found that “students who expected tough grading significantly outperformed students who expected lenient grades on examinations in eleven sections of an educational psychology course” (as cited by Gordon and Palmon, 2010, p. 26). All of this supports Tinto’s (2012) belief that setting high expectations for students is one of four conditions necessary to support student success and retention.

Students classify course workloads based on a variety of factors, including the amount of content covered in a course as well as the complexity of this content. Their perception of the course workload can impact their approach to the learning experience. According to Kember (2004), students who use learning techniques associated with deep learning do not perceive course workload to be heavy. Students who perceive workload to be heavy, more often depend on surface learning and demonstrate less use of higher order thinking.

## Academic rigor and Schoolcraft students

During the Fall 2017 semester, Schoolcraft College hosted a three-part faculty professional develop-

ment series titled *Teaching Today’s Students* (Thomson & Randall, 2017). The first segment of this series included a panel of Schoolcraft students who shared their thoughts about many issues related to their experiences at the college. Several important points were brought into focus, including that these students want to be challenged. They emphasized their desire for rigor in their coursework. Further, the students pointed out that there is a common misperception that they only care about grades, when, in reality, they care about their learning. These students also mentioned that they selected Schoolcraft College in the first place because of its academic reputation, and try to register for courses with professors who have a reputation as being “engaging.”

In general, Schoolcraft is considered as a place where high expectations are set and achieved. Students perceive their courses to be intellectually challenging and faculty believe students experience intellectual growth here (Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, 2016). Further, “80% of prospective and current Schoolcraft College students agree or strongly agree with this statement about the college experience: *I want to be challenged to work hard*” (Schoolcraft College Office of Strategic Enrollment Management, 2015, p. 1). In addition, Schoolcraft is ranked higher than comparison colleges when measuring student satisfaction in many areas, including their ability to experience intellectual growth (Schoolcraft College Office of Strategic Enrollment Management, 2015).

A variety of causes may impact a student’s decision to leave Schoolcraft, but academic rigor is not one of them. In other words, students often note that they choose (or need) to leave the college because of financial, family, work, or sched-

uling issues. They do not indicate that rigor plays a role in this decision (Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics, 2018).

## How can academic rigor be integrated into courses?

College faculty who are passionate about the content they are teaching have a fine line to walk when sharing their knowledge and experience with students in determining how much students need to know and how best to share it. There is often an abundance of content to convey and limited time in which to accomplish this. Helping students to learn what they “need to know” while maintaining high levels of academic rigor can be a challenge. According to Absher and Gaitlin (as cited by Lau, 2003, p. 132), “(b)esides providing students with a basic understanding of a specific discipline, faculty members must help them to think logically, critically, and imaginatively, and to develop more effective oral and written communication skills. It is important that instructors concentrate on nurturing each student’s critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills that are needed for the ever-changing world.” Building on instructional strategies, such as those listed below, that support the student’s development and encourage higher-level thinking, can help them to achieve their full potential, while promoting academic rigor.

**Ask high-level questions** – Use questioning during class, on exams, and in homework that requires students to think deeply. During class discussions, encourage them to pause before responding, and then provide enough time to allow students to formulate a response before providing an answer for them. Ask probing questions, and/or require students to support their responses with evidence to further increase critical and creative thinking. En-

*continued on p. 12*

courage them to consider alternative viewpoints and critically compare them to their own.

**Use scaffolding** – Be sure lessons systematically move from one to the next, especially when covering dense or complex content. Review fundamental skills as necessary before moving on to advanced ones, and encourage students who are struggling to seek extra help, or work with them independently to facilitate the transition to higher-level or more complex topics. Provide detailed notes or study guides at the beginning of a semester and gradually remove the detail to allow students to become more independent at note-taking and studying. Allow, or even require, students to create a crib sheet for testing as this encourages them to spend significant time with the course material to create an effective crib sheet. This also pushes students beyond the mere memorization of facts and encourages deeper learning (Kember, 2004).

**Provide frequent, detailed feedback** – Break down large projects into smaller chunks which are due at regular intervals rather than as a large packet at the end of the semester. Then, provide feedback which specifically identifies how students can improve on a “draft.” Again, ask probing questions and encourage them to expand on the work they have started. Allow students to revise before submitting a final version of a project or paper by encouraging them to “dig deeper” or explore conflicting ideas. The more opportunities students have to interact with their own writing, analysis, or creative work, the more skilled they will become in their ability to revise and improve it, as well as to be better able to use their metacognitive skills to reflect on their own learning.

**Require homework and regular study time** – Students are regularly reminded that they should be spending 2-3 hours per week outside of class for every credit hour, yet most students say they actually spend far less than this. The students in the previously mentioned Teaching Today’s Students panel said they do not spend nearly that much time interacting with the course material outside of class. The Social Science Research Council’s Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) Longitudinal Project found that a typical full-time student only spends 12-14 hours studying per week – that is about one hour for every credit hour (as cited by Bart, 2011). Is this because students are choosing to not complete assignments or regularly study? Or, is it because they truly do not need to spend the time because the workload or rigor does not require it?

Providing frequent homework assignments, practice tests, study timelines, and other low-stakes learning tasks can encourage students to more frequently engage with course content. More frequent engagement can lead to deeper understanding and more critical learning. However, “to motivate students effectively, it is vital that assignments and readings are engaging and worthwhile” (Heller, 2010).

**Seek feedback from students** – On an exam, ask students to reflect on its difficulty and their own preparation process: Was the exam harder/easier than expected? How long did you study? Do you feel that was adequate? Were there any “impossible” or “too easy” questions on the exam? How well do you think you did and why?

Solicit additional anonymous feedback from students at random times during the semester. Find out if the course is a positive, challenging, or frustrating experience, and

why. Ask specific questions, such as: What is working well for you in this class and should be continued? What is not working and should be revised or removed? How can I better help you to meet your potential?

Most important, use student feedback to reflect on how to adjust instruction and assessment. Consider small changes that can be made to better meet students’ needs or improve the learning experience.

**Set (and keep) the bar high** – According to Arum (as cited by Bart, 2011), “students have found ways to navigate through college with little asked of them.” Further, Chickering and Gamson (1987) say “expect more and you will get more. High expectations—for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well-motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations of themselves” (p. 4-5). Many students report little is required in terms of reading and writing. Using unannounced quizzes or a flipped model of instruction can put more accountability on students to complete assignments. Further, do not accept work that is below the minimum standard. Instead, ask students to revise and resubmit to promote the development of higher-level work.

**Provide a balanced learning environment** – Setting high expectations and encouraging students to achieve them is an admirable goal, but it also is important to be realistic. Every assignment within a class cannot and should not be rigorous. It is equally important to take the time to reflect on previous learning and gain some confidence before moving on to the next challenge. While there can be an overall high standard, too much rigor can stifle learning (Ungemah, 2012). Fur-

ther, rigor should be relevant and purposeful to be effective (Weimer, 2016), and not just rigor for the sake of making a point.

The amount of challenge in a course must be appropriate. According to Paff (2018), if a course “is too easy or too difficult student motivation is decreased. Too easy suggests the value or worth is low. Likewise, students may not put forth sufficient effort if a task seems impossible” (p. 2).

## Conclusion

Students want to be challenged in their academic coursework. They want high standards to be set, and to be provided the instructional experiences and support to allow them to meet these standards. In other words, students want rigor and will not withdraw from a class or drop out of college because too much is expected of them. Faculty can provide this type of learning experience by requiring students to think critically

and creatively through careful questioning, structured instruction, and regular deep engagement with the content they are teaching. Maintaining high expectations for learners will help them to develop the skills necessary to be successful in their future classes and careers, but more importantly, it can help them to persist in their coursework to reach graduation. That, of course, is the ultimate goal for all stakeholders.

## Works Cited

- Armstrong, P. (2018). *Bloom's Taxonomy*. Retrieved from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>.
- Bart, M. (April 11, 2011). What Can Be Done to Boost Academic Rigor? *Faculty Focus*. Retrieved from <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/what-can-be-done-to-boost-academic-rigor/>.
- Braxton, J. M., & Francis, C. H. (2018). The Influence of Academic Rigor on Factors Related to College Student Persistence. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2018(181), 73-87.
- Chickering, A.W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education. *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin*, 80, 3-7.
- Francis, C. (2018). Academic Rigor in the College Classroom: Two Federal Commissions Strive to Define Rigor in the Past 70 Years. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2018(181), 25-34.
- Gordon, M. E., & Palmon, O. (2010). Spare the Rigor, Spoil the Learning. *Academe*, 96(4), 25-27.
- Heller, P. R. (September 15, 2010). Motivating Students to Spend Sufficient Time on Weekly Assignments. Retrieved from <http://paulrheller.com/2010/09/motivating-students-to-spend-sufficient-time-on-weekly-assignments>.
- Kember, D. (2004). Interpreting Student Workload and the Factors which Shape Students' Perception of their Workload. *Studies in Higher Education*, 29(2), 165-184.
- Lau, L. K. (Fall 2003). Institutional Factors Affecting Student Retention. *Education*, 124(1), 126-136.
- Paff, L. (November 14, 2018). Enhancing Learning through Zest, Grit, and Sweat. *Faculty Focus*. Retrieved from <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/course-design-ideas/enhancing-learning-zest-grit/>.
- Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2016). *Data Bites* (June 2016 ed.) Livonia, MI: Author.
- Schoolcraft College Office of Research and Analytics. (2018). *Data Bites* (March 2018 ed.). Livonia, MI: Author.
- Schoolcraft College Office of Strategic Enrollment Management. (2015). *Data Point* (November 2015 ed.). Livonia, MI: Author.
- Thomson, A., & Randall, M. (November 3, 2017). *Teaching Today's Students*. Panel presented for Schoolcraft College Faculty Professional Development, Livonia, MI.
- Tinto, V. (2012). *Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ungemah, L. D. (September 18, 2012). What is Academic Rigor?!. *HuffPost - Breaking News, U.S. and World News*. Retrieved from <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/>.
- Weimer, M. (November 9, 2016). Courses that are Hard, but Not Too Hard: Finding the Sweet Spot. *Faculty Focus*. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingprofessor.com/topics/for-those-who-teach/finding-sweet-spot-hard-easy-courses/>.

# Resources

## Learning Support Services

Excerpts from the Learning Support Services October 2018 Newsletter. Learning support services are available for students one-on-one or in groups outside of class time. Often members of the Learning Support team will also come into your classroom to share resources with all of your students. Please see more details below and share information about these important opportunities with your students.

### Writing Support Studio

In the spirit of Schoolcraft's commitment to providing students the most current practices in education and career preparation, the Winter 2018 semester saw some exciting changes with some of the services in the department. With the transition from Writing Fellows to the Writing Support Studio, we aim to continue that commitment and expand its scope. Some of these expansions include comprehensive writing consultant training, the implementation of a free online consultation option, an increased commitment to support writing across all disciplines, and mid-semester pop-up writing consultation events.

**The Writing Support Studio is open from 10 am-6 pm Monday-Thursday, 10 am-5 pm Friday, and 12 pm-4 pm Saturday in L119.**

*Stephanie Reynolds*  
[sreynold@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:sreynold@schoolcraft.edu)

### Tutoring Lab

Still one of the most comprehensive and high-traffic programs offered in our department, the Tutoring Lab is a student-focused space in which students can receive free drop-in tutoring for STEM and other courses at Schoolcraft. The Tutoring Lab saw over 10,000 visits during the Fall and Winter semesters of 2017-2018. Our tutors are well-equipped to help students increase their comprehension and retention of their coursework with 35 hours of training and shadowing with specialized training in the Socratic method.

**The Tutoring Lab is open from 8 am-8 pm Monday-Thursday, 8 am-5 pm Friday, and 12 pm-4 pm Saturday in L119, and an updated tutor schedule is on our website.**

*Sharon Christian*  
[schristi@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:schristi@schoolcraft.edu)

### International Learning Support

Our department's support of international students has undergone some exciting transitions, as well. The Winter 2018 semester also saw the transition from the Language Fellows to the International Learning Support program, providing academic support specifically tailored to sponsor the success of international students in addition to expanding our hours and workshops. ILS is a community space, providing free drop-in tutoring, literature readings, and conversation skills sessions for all international students.

**International Learning Support is open from Monday-Thursday 10 am-4 pm in L110.**

*Hollie Reynolds*  
[hreynold@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:hreynold@schoolcraft.edu)

### Peer Assisted Learning

The Peer Assisted Learning program, another of our most expansive services, offers students peer mentorship within traditionally difficult courses. In the Fall and Winter semesters of 2017-2018, the PAL Program saw over 8,250 points of contact with students, and this year, the program has 30 course sections with PAL Leaders and expanded its services this fall to include Occupational Programs. PAL Leaders host workshops, lead study sessions, and provide customized assistance to students to provide strategies for achieving academic success. PAL Leaders are highly recommended to the program by the instructor and participate in specialized intensive training to learn and implement evidence-based mentorship practices.

*Sharon Christian*  
[schristi@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:schristi@schoolcraft.edu)

### Academic Success Coaching

Academic Success Coaches help students with reading, writing, test-taking skills, and study skills. Dr. Carmen Wilson meets with students one-on-one to help students create a tailored plan for success in their courses. Dominique Mones, a former PAL Leader, assists students in preparing for TEAS, an enhanced exam for the nursing program. Dominique hosts weekly sessions and has helped 24 students this semester with a 99% pass rate.

*Dr. Carmen Wilson* [cwilson@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:cwilson@schoolcraft.edu)  
*Dominique Mones* [dmones@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:dmones@schoolcraft.edu)

### Library Services

The Library provides students with access to the academic resources they need to further their education, including books, eBooks, reference materials, and journal articles from a variety of databases. We also have Library liaisons who provide instructional support by helping to create online course guides and by providing class visits to support student research. Library staff members have backgrounds in information science, directing faculty, staff, and students to the best resources. This semester, the Library hosted the first round of an event, Last Manga Standing, in which over 60 participants chose which manga would be added to the library collection.

*Wayne Pricer*  
[wpricer@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:wpricer@schoolcraft.edu)

### Radcliff LAC

The Radcliff Learning Assistance Center is available to help students, faculty, and staff at Schoolcraft's Radcliff campus. We have walk-in tutoring and testing services with a variety of tutors available to meet the needs of students with various class materials. On Monday, October 22nd, we held our annual Open House. During this event, we highlight our LAC services, shared information about the Radcliff Food Pantry and Professional Clothing Closet, and distributed donated prizes from various offices across campus. One of these prizes was a \$250 Sirkka Gudan scholarship provided by the Schoolcraft Foundation for the Winter 2019 semester, won by Jennifer Skwarski, an HIT student.

*Sherrye Bailey*  
[sbailey@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:sbailey@schoolcraft.edu)

## Center for Academic and Faculty Excellence

Many college professors have years of training and expertise in their content area, but little or no formal education in instructional techniques. If you are interested in having a one-on-one session to learn some tricks of the trade to incorporate directly into your classroom please contact any of the Curriculum Designers in the Center for Academic and Faculty Excellence!

*Dianne Aitken* [daitken@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:daitken@schoolcraft.edu)  
*Scott Davis* [sdavis@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:sdavis@schoolcraft.edu)  
*Anne Huber* [ahuber@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:ahuber@schoolcraft.edu)

# The Community College Enterprise

By Contributing Author  
Alec Thomson

Good college instructors are constantly looking to develop new techniques and strategies that can boost the success of students in their classes. Of course, given the large variability in students, classes and subjects, isolating a single area of focus for achieving this success is not realistic. As such, an instructor's attention becomes self-directed as they think of developing effective presentations, employing classroom technology or establishing productive classroom management techniques. Alternatively, efforts such as attempts create a guided reading assignments, establish peer review groups or encouraging better dialogue in an online discussion board are decidedly more student-focused. Regardless of what specific approach you are looking to embrace, you should consider searching the online archives of *The Community College Enterprise* ([www.schoolcraft.edu/cce](http://www.schoolcraft.edu/cce)).

Based out of Schoolcraft College, The Enterprise is a peer-reviewed research journal publishing original essays that expand our knowledge about the structure and nature of teaching and learning within the community college arena. The myriad articles found in the journal represent the cutting edge practices and techniques that currently define the community college experience. Within the last year the journal has featured articles on creating space for international students, the effect of seat location on student success, library usage by online students, a review of *Submittable* for managing student work, and many more topics. There is quite easily something for every instructor to be had within the files of *The Enterprise*.

Beyond being an outstanding resource for professional development reading and instructional ideas, The Enterprise is always soliciting submissions from authors who have conducted research on community colleges. Details regarding the submission process can be found on the website, but you can also direct inquiries to Editor Alec Thomson ([athomson@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:athomson@schoolcraft.edu)) or Managing Editor Gordon Krupsky ([gkrupsky@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:gkrupsky@schoolcraft.edu)).

You are encouraged to take a moment to investigate all that this tremendous resource has available for you.

# Professional Development Opportunities

## Teaching Today's Students

Teaching Today's Students Parts 4 and 5 will be offered on-ground Winter Term 2019.

### Part 4: Understanding Students with Disabilities

*February 20, 2019. Watch your inbox for time and location.*

Every student on campus has the opportunity to learn, but some need additional supports in order to succeed. Dr. Michael Oliver, Associate Dean of Counseling and Student Support and Andy Wonnacott, Disabilities Support Services Advocate, will provide a brief overview of the disabilities process on campus. Explore the most common disabilities among our students, including concrete, specific information on behaviors students may exhibit. The session will include interactive and experiential components to provide insights into the challenges faced by some students with disabilities.

### Part 5: Effective Classroom Techniques for Working with Students with Disabilities

*March 19, 2019. Watch your inbox for time and location.*

How do you meet the needs of students with disabilities in the context of your regular classroom? Learn techniques that have proven effective in working with students with disabilities on campus from your peers. Faculty from several departments will share methods they have successfully used to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Resources for faculty will be included to enable further examination of effective techniques.

## Honors Faculty Training

Honors Faculty Training is being offered again Winter 2019, through the CAFE Organization on Blackboard. If you are already aiding students with their Honors Option Projects, or if you are interested in learning more about the Schoolcraft Scholars Honors program at Schoolcraft College, this training is for you! Earn CEUs while you explore the Honors program criteria, how to get involved as an Honors Option student advisor, and how to encourage higher order thinking for both you Honors and traditional students.

If you would like to talk with someone in the Honors office about getting involved, please call 734-462-6771 or email [honors@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:honors@schoolcraft.edu).

## The CAFE Action Board

Helen Ditouras	Tom Worthington
Mark Huston	Dianne Aitken
Chris Misiak	Cindy Cicchelli
Wayne Pricer	Scott Davis
Elzbieta	Anne Huber
Rybicka	Leslie Petty
Cheryl Snyder	Sandi Tyler

*The views and opinions included in this event, email, or document belong to the author and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Schoolcraft College Center for Academic and Faculty Excellence (CAFE). Further, the CAFE does not necessarily endorse any products or processes that may be described.*

An electronic version of the CAFE Newsletter with live links to the resources can be found here: [U:\CAFE \(Center for Academic & Faculty Excellence\)\CAFE Newsletters](http://U:\CAFE (Center for Academic & Faculty Excellence)\CAFE Newsletters)

**Visit the CAFE**  
in the Grote Center or at our website: [SCFacultyCAFE.org](http://SCFacultyCAFE.org)

# Pageturners

## Book Club Schedule

### Winter 2019

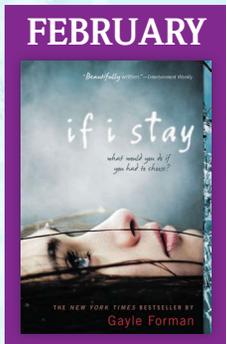


### **Murder on the Orient Express: A Hercule Poirot Mystery**

by Agatha Christie

Just after midnight, the famous Orient Express is stopped in its tracks by a snowdrift. By morning, the millionaire Samuel Edward Ratchett lies dead in his compartment, stabbed a dozen times, his door locked from the inside. Without a shred of doubt, one of his fellow passengers is the murderer. Isolated by the storm, detective Hercule Poirot must find the killer among a dozen of the dead man's enemies, before the murderer decides to strike again.

<b>FRI</b>	<b>January 25</b>	<b>10:00 – 12:00 p.m.</b>	<b>MC 100</b>	<b>Movie: Murder on the Orient Express</b>
<b>TUE</b>	<b>January 29</b>	<b>1:30 – 2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>LA 130</b>	<b>Book Discussion</b>

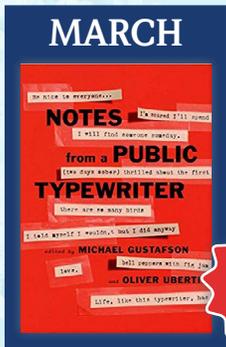


### **If I Stay**

by Gayle Forman

In the blink of an eye everything changes. Seventeen-year-old Mia has no memory of the accident; she can only recall what happened afterwards, watching her own damaged body being taken from the wreck. Little by little she struggles to put together the pieces—to figure out what she has lost, what she has left, and the very difficult choice she must make. Heart-wrenchingly beautiful, this will change the way you look at life, love, and family. Now a major motion picture starring Chloe Grace Moretz, Mia's story will stay with you for a long, long time.

<b>THUR</b>	<b>February 14</b>	<b>10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</b>	<b>MC 100</b>	<b>Movie: If I Stay</b>
<b>TUE</b>	<b>February 26</b>	<b>1:30 – 2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>LA 130</b>	<b>Book Discussion</b>



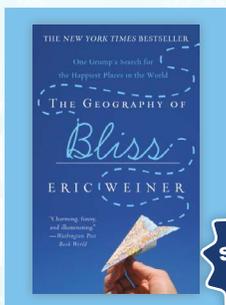
### **Notes from a Public Typewriter**

by Michael Gustafson (Editor) and Oliver Uberti (Editor)

When Michael Gustafson and his wife Hilary opened Literati Bookstore in Ann Arbor, MI, they put out a typewriter for anyone to use. They had no idea what to expect. Would people ask metaphysical questions? Write mean things? Pour their souls onto the page? Yes, no, and *did they ever*. In *Notes from a Public Typewriter*, Michael Gustafson and designer Oliver Uberti have combined their favorite notes with essays and photos to create an ode to community and the written word that will surprise, delight, and inspire.



<b>MON</b>	<b>March 25</b>	<b>11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.</b>	<b>VT 550</b>	<b>Meet the Author: Conversation and Book Signing with Michael Gustafson</b>
<b>TUE</b>	<b>March 26</b>	<b>1:30 – 2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>LA 130</b>	<b>Book Discussion</b>



### **The Geography of Bliss: One Grump's Search for the Happiest Places in the World**

by Eric Weiner

*The Geography of Bliss* takes the reader across the globe to investigate not what happiness is, but WHERE it is. Are people in Switzerland happier because it is the most democratic country in the world? Is the King of Bhutan a visionary for his initiative to calculate Gross National Happiness? Why is Asheville, North Carolina so happy? In a unique mix of travel, psychology, science and humor, Eric Weiner answers those questions and many others, offering travelers of all moods some interesting new ideas for sunnier destinations and dispositions.

### **Focus Series & Pageturners Panel Discussion: To Be or Not to Be Happy**

<b>TUE</b>	<b>March 12</b>	<b>11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</b>	<b>MC 100</b>
------------	-----------------	--------------------------------	---------------



For more information, please contact Ela Rybicka | [erybicka@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:erybicka@schoolcraft.edu) | 734.462.7191 | Office: LA 544

Pageturners is the book club of Schoolcraft College. It is open to all students, faculty, staff, administrators and community friends. Discussion sessions are facilitated by Schoolcraft students. Pageturners is supported by a grant from the Schoolcraft College Foundation.