

# Implementation of Mandatory Enrollment in Student Development



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Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment  
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## **NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING, AND ASSESSMENT**

The purpose of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment is to conduct analytical studies and provide information in support of institutional planning, policy formulation and decision making. In addition, the office provides leadership and support in research related activities to members of the NOVA community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.

When citing data from this report, the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment must be cited as the source.

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## Introduction

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) enacted six policy changes in Fall 2014 (see Table 1), including a renewed effort to enforce the existing mandate that all students in the GPS for Success cohort<sup>1</sup>, a subset of first-time in college (FTIC) students, enroll in a Student Development (SDV) course within their first 15 credits. SDV courses at NOVA are offered to help first-time in college students develop essential skills to accomplish their academic goals and successfully transition to college. These one-credit student success courses include information on topics such as study skills, time-management, decision-making, and the development of a college and career success plan. At NOVA, GPS students are to enroll in either SDV 100: College Success Skills or SDV 101: Orientation to a Specific Discipline (e.g., Health Care, Education, IT, etc.). When comparing enrollment for these courses, the majority of students typically choose to enroll in SDV 100 over SDV 101.

This report reviews Student Development course enrollment data (SDV 100/101) for GPS students at NOVA in an effort to determine the success of the implementation of the policy. It presents data from Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 to show enrollment in these courses pre- and post-policy implementation.

**Table 1. Six Policies Implemented at NOVA in Fall 2014**

<b>Policy 1</b>	Mandate placement testing for first-time in college students
<b>Policy 2</b>	Mandate Student Orientation for first-time in college students
<b>Policy 3</b>	Mandate early advising for first-time in college students
<b>Policy 4</b>	Mandate enrollment in developmental courses for first-time in college students during the first semester (if placed)
<b>Policy 5</b>	<b>Enforce current policy on Student Development (SDV) completion within the first year for first-time in college students</b>
<b>Policy 6</b>	Mandate on-time registration for all students, requiring students register by 11:59 p.m. the day before the session begins

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<sup>1</sup> Recent high school or home-school graduates or GED recipients ages 17-24 who have never previously attended college (unless they were dual enrolled during high school).

## **Findings and Recommendations**

Overall, there was a 2 percentage point increase from Fall 2013 (53 percent) to Fall 2014 (55 percent) in the proportion of GPS students who enrolled in SDV during their first semester. However, since students are required to take the course within their first 15 credits, and the majority of students may not accrue this many credit hours during their first semester, the full effect of this policy change may not be seen until the completion of the Spring 2015 semester.

Results by campus show that the percentage of GPS students who enrolled in SDV during their first semester in Fall 2014 ranged from 42 percent to 67 percent. Given these results, all campuses may benefit from increasing their outreach efforts with GPS students early in the registration process so that students enroll in SDV as required.

A lower proportion of GPS students took SDV in Fall 2014 compared to Fall 2013 at the Loudoun and Medical Education Campuses, therefore these campuses in particular may want to closely follow the SDV enrollment status of GPS students in the future.

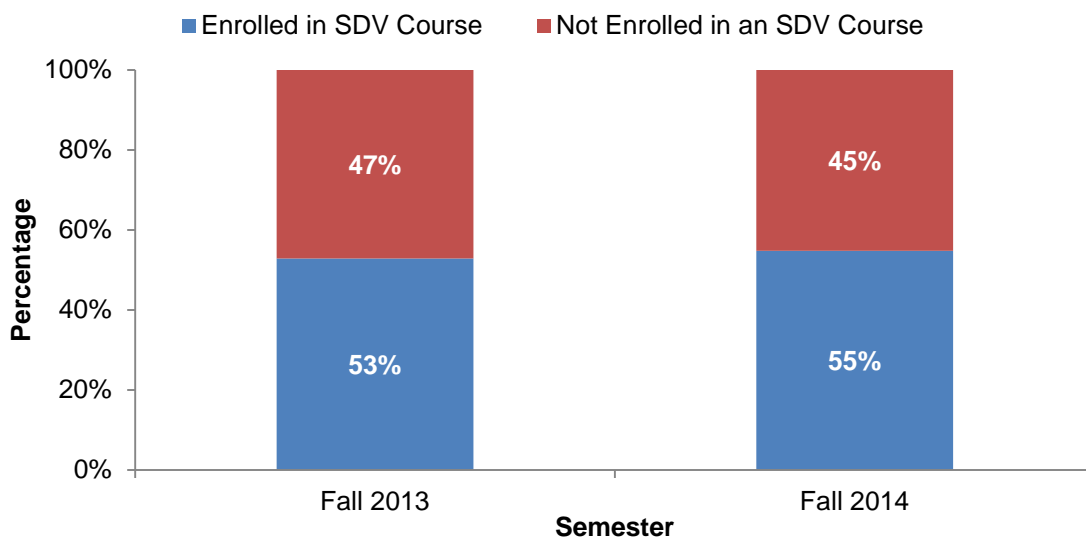
Data from other schools show it may take several semesters until closer to one-hundred percent of GPS students are in compliance with the policy and enroll in an SDV course within their first 15 credits.

## Implementation of Mandatory Enrollment in Student Development

Between Fall 2103 and Fall 2014, the GPS student population increased by around seven percent (627 students), while the number of GPS students who enrolled in an SDV course in their first semester at NOVA increased by 11 percent (506 students). In Fall 2013, 53 percent of GPS students (4,422 students) enrolled in an SDV course, compared to 55 percent (4,928) in Fall 2014 (see Figure 1 and Table 2, next page). The renewed enforcement of the mandatory SDV policy beginning in Fall 2014 did not have a large impact on SDV enrollment during students' first semester compared to the previous year. However, because students are required to take the course within their first 15 credits, and some students may not accrue this many credit hours during their first semester (e.g., part-time students), the full effect of this policy change may not be seen until the completion of the spring semester. Therefore, further study is warranted.

One of the primary concerns in enforcing the SDV enrollment policy was the ability to offer a sufficient number of sections of the course on each campus in order to meet the greater demand. It was estimated that 30 additional sections of SDV (in total, for the College) would be needed to accommodate projected demand. While the percentage of GPS students enrolling in SDV in Fall 2014 was not as high as originally anticipated, the ability to enroll more students in the course shows that NOVA effectively increased the capacity (number of courses and faculty) to handle the larger number of expected students. The marginal increase in students enrolling in SDV in their first semester means that the remaining 45 percent of the Fall 2014 GPS student population (4,095 students who did not enroll in an SDV course in their first semester at NOVA) will need to take an SDV course in the coming semester(s). In order to enforce the policy fairly and successfully, NOVA will likely have to make additional adjustments to SDV course availability and increase capacity to continue to accommodate this increase in demand.

**Figure 1. GPS Students Who Enrolled in SDV 100/101 in Their First Semester at NOVA: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014**





In a survey on the SDV enrollment policy conducted at NOVA during the Fall 2014 semester, after policy changes were implemented, FTIC students were asked about their awareness of the policy. Responses revealed that 95 percent of respondents (123 respondents) were aware of the policy change. Five percent of respondents (7 respondents) said they were not aware of the policy change. Survey results also showed that 67 percent of respondents (79 respondents) were aware of the policy at least one month before classes started. Although the survey did not achieve a high response rate, the results suggest that the nominal change in the proportion of GPS students who enrolled in SDV during their first semester from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014 cannot be attributed to a lack of awareness of the policy.

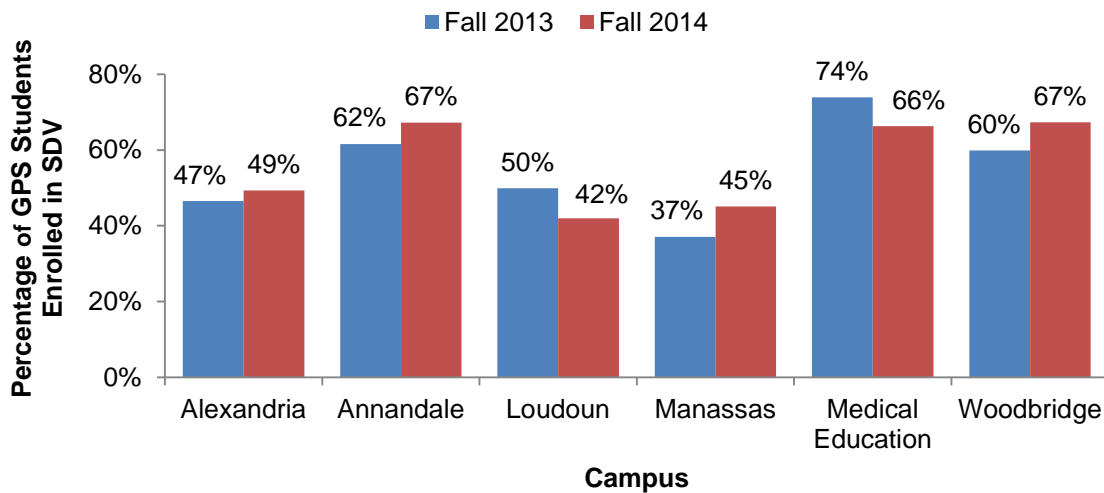
### ***Campus Differences***

Table 2 and Figure 2 (next page) present the number and percentage of GPS students who enrolled in SDV (SDV 100 or SDV 101) in their first semester at NOVA by campus. The proportion of GPS students who took SDV increased at four campuses (Alexandria, Annandale, Manassas, and Woodbridge) and decreased at two campuses (Loudoun and Medical Education). The Annandale and Woodbridge Campuses had the highest proportion of GPS students who enrolled in SDV in Fall 2014 (67 percent at each campus; 1,739 students at Annandale, and 861 students at Woodbridge). At the Loudoun Campus, the overall number of GPS students increased, but a lower percentage enrolled in SDV (50 percent in Fall 2013 vs. 42 percent in Fall 2014).

**Table 2. GPS Students Who Enrolled in SDV 100/101 in Their First Semester at NOVA by Campus: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014**

Campus	Fall 2013			Fall 2014		
	GPS Students	Enrolled in SDV 100/101 in Their First Semester		GPS Students	Enrolled in SDV 100/101 in Their First Semester	
		#	%		#	%
Alexandria	1,380	642	46.5%	1,353	667	49.3%
Annandale	2,628	1,618	61.6%	2,587	1,739	67.2%
Loudoun	1,654	826	49.9%	2,326	977	42.0%
Manassas	1,382	513	37.1%	1,394	629	45.1%
Medical Education	92	68	73.9%	83	55	66.3%
Woodbridge	1,260	755	59.9%	1,280	861	67.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,396</b>	<b>4,422</b>	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>9,023</b>	<b>4,928</b>	<b>54.6%</b>

**Figure 2. GPS Students Who Enrolled in SDV in Their First Semester at NOVA by Campus: Fall 2013 and Fall 2014**



### ***Student Development Courses at Other Institutions***

Ivy Technical Community College (Ivy Tech), an Achieving the Dream institution, implemented a policy in the 2010-11 academic year requiring all new students to enroll in a student success course. All students are required to take a one-credit course (IVYT 101: First Year Seminar), though students may elect to take a more comprehensive three-credit course (IVYT 120: New Student Seminar). Students who place into at least one remedial course are required to take the three-credit course.<sup>i, ii</sup> Ivy Tech had a sixty percent compliance rate for its Fall 2010 first-time students.<sup>iii</sup> In 2011, eighty-two percent of first-time students enrolled in a success course, and in 2012 eighty-nine percent enrolled in a success course.<sup>iv, v</sup> The percentage of first-time students enrolled in a success course dropped for the Fall 2013 cohort, to seventy-seven percent.<sup>vi</sup> Each year several hundred students who are required to take the three-credit course enroll in the one-credit course.<sup>vii</sup>

Durham Technical Community College (Durham Tech) is an Achieving the Dream institution located in North Carolina. Students entering Durham Tech with fewer than 12 college credits are required to enroll in a college success course similar to NOVA's SDV courses. Over time, enrollment in the course has increased, though the majority of required students are still not completing the course. In Fall 2007, nine percent of required students enrolled in the college success course. In 2008, eighteen percent of required students enrolled. In 2009 and 2010, the percentages rose to twenty and twenty-six percent, respectively. Durham Tech notes it faces a challenge with students who are not required to enroll in the course consistently taking the course. This has led to issues with balancing the cost of offering the course and the ability to offer enough sections to reach the targeted group as well as other interested students. Durham Tech feared advisors were promoting the course as a graduation requirement, leading students to enroll in the course later in their college careers than intended. The school has hired additional staff and revised its advising model to ensure new students are getting the information they need regarding the required college success course.<sup>viii</sup>

The data from Ivy Tech and Durham Tech show that it can take time for students to be in compliance with a policy regarding enrollment in student success courses. Given that NOVA already had the requirement in place and in Fall 2014 started a renewed effort to enforce the SDV policy, it will likely take several semesters before the policy takes hold. Given the early gains in enrollment at Ivy Tech, it is possible that NOVA will see large increases in the percentage of GPS students enrolled in SDV courses within a few semesters. Since students are not required to take the course in their first semester, depending on how many credits they take, the success of the implementation of the policy will need to continue to be assessed after additional semesters have passed. If NOVA experiences an issue similar to the one at Durham Tech, where large numbers of students outside of the mandated policy enroll in SDV courses potentially taking seats from students who should be in the courses, registration priority could be given to GPS students to ensure they are able to take an SDV course as soon as possible.

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<sup>i</sup> Achieving the Dream (n.d.). *Mandatory Student Success Course (SSC)*. Retrieved on December 11, 2014 from <http://achievingthedream.org/intervention/13618/mandatory-student-success-course-ssc>

<sup>ii</sup> Ivy Technical Community College (n.d.). *Course Descriptions*. Retrieved on December 11, 2014 from <http://www.ivytech.edu/academics/2014-course-descriptions.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Ivy Tech Office of Institutional Research (2014). *Achieving the Dream Fall 2010 Intervention Performance Report Supporting Documents*. Retrieved December 11, 2014 from [http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall\\_2010\\_ATD\\_Cohort\\_Statewide.pdf](http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall_2010_ATD_Cohort_Statewide.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Ivy Tech Office of Institutional Research (2014). *Achieving the Dream Fall 2011 Intervention Performance Report Supporting Documents*. Retrieved December 11, 2014 from [http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall\\_2011\\_ATD\\_Cohort\\_Statewide.pdf](http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall_2011_ATD_Cohort_Statewide.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> Ivy Tech Office of Institutional Research (2014). *Achieving the Dream Fall 2012 Intervention Performance Report Supporting Documents*. Retrieved December 11, 2014 from [http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall\\_2012\\_ATD\\_Cohort\\_Statewide.pdf](http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall_2012_ATD_Cohort_Statewide.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> Ivy Tech Office of Institutional Research (2014). *Achieving the Dream Fall 2013 Intervention Performance Report Supporting Documents*. Retrieved December 11, 2014 from [http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall\\_2013\\_ATD\\_Cohort\\_Statewide.pdf](http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall_2013_ATD_Cohort_Statewide.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> Ivy Tech Office of Institutional Research (2014). *Achieving the Dream Fall 2010-Fall 2013 Intervention Performance Report Supporting Documents*. Retrieved December 11, 2014 from [http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall\\_2010\\_ATD\\_Cohort\\_Statewide.pdf](http://www.ivytech.edu/institutionalresearch/atd/Fall_2010_ATD_Cohort_Statewide.pdf)  
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<sup>viii</sup> Achieving the Dream (2011). *Durham Technical Community College Annual Narrative Report: April 2011*. Retrieved on December 11, 2014 from <http://durhamtech.edu/reap/atd/annualreports/2011annualreport.pdf>

## ***NOVA Mission and Strategic Goals***

### **Mission**

With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

### **Strategic Goals**

- I. **STUDENT SUCCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will move into the top tier of community colleges with respect to the college readiness, developmental course completion, retention, graduation, transfer, and career placement of its students.
- II. **ACCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase the number and diversity of students being served to mirror the population growth of the region.
- III. **TEACHING AND LEARNING** – Northern Virginia Community College will focus on student success by creating an environment of world-class teaching and learning.
- IV. **EXCELLENCE** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop ten focal points of excellence in its educational programs and services that will be benchmarked to the best in the nation and strategic to building the College's overall reputation for quality.
- V. **LEADERSHIP** – Northern Virginia Community College will serve as a catalyst and a leader in developing educational and economic opportunities for all Northern Virginians and in maintaining the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region.
- VI. **PARTNERSHIPS** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop strategic partnerships to create gateways of opportunity and an integrated educational system for Northern Virginians who are pursuing the American Dream.
- VII. **RESOURCES** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase its annual funding by \$100 million and expand its physical facilities by more than one million square feet in new and renovated space. This includes the establishment of two additional campuses at epicenters of the region's population growth, as well as additional education and training facilities in or near established population centers.
- VIII. **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS** – Northern Virginia Community College will be recognized as a leader among institutions of higher education in Virginia for its development and testing of emergency response and continuity of operation plans.

# **NOVA**

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