

The *SuccessNavigator*® assessment in action

IOWA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Dan Kinney, Ph.D., President of Iowa Western Community College (IWCC), is responsible for implementing the institution's strategic plan and moving the school forward. He and his team have been exploring initiatives that will help increase

student success and completion rates, a key strategic goal.

Challenges facing today's students

Kinney views the lack of college readiness as a significant obstacle to student success: "After 12 years of schooling, students are often not prepared academically to take college-level courses, and they become frustrated when placed in developmental classes and sometimes drop out."

How the *SuccessNavigator*® assessment helps students succeed

"After completing a promising pilot administration, we're now giving the *SuccessNavigator* test to every incoming student, so we have the data before they attend orientation. The test is also used in our first-semester student success class. In addition, we've added staff members we call 'intrusive advisors,' who work with at-risk students to provide early intervention. ETS even presented a workshop to help our advisors and faculty interpret the test results and most effectively guide our students, which has made a big difference.

"Improving student success is one of our top priorities. The *SuccessNavigator* assessment has enabled us to accelerate incoming students into college-level courses rather than a developmental track that can discourage them. Our faculty is excited about the way this tool is helping them tailor their curriculum and teaching methods based on their students' strengths and weaknesses. And our advisors can direct students toward the services and resources that will benefit them most.

"With the *SuccessNavigator* assessment, we're able to take a 'bigger picture' look at our students, learn more about their challenges and do a better job of helping them succeed."

"The *SuccessNavigator* assessment is a better predictor of how a student will do in college than GPA and academic tests. It provides the information we need to most effectively advise our students and place them in courses that will help them succeed."

SPOTLIGHT ON DELANY SMITH

Delany is in her first semester at IWCC. Although her parents didn't go to college, her three siblings received their degrees and she was expected to attend college also. Delany applied for and received several generous scholarships to attend IWCC and also received a full Pell Grant. As a result, Delany has very few out-of-pocket expenses. She has worked two jobs since she was 16 and, in addition to her classes, is working 15–20 hours a week.

Although she has had a few conflicts with one of her suitemates, Delany's first semester at IWCC has gone very well. During the scholarship application process, she connected with a staff member in the Foundation Office who has been a great resource on financial matters. Delany has also enjoyed her classes and has built solid relationships with multiple instructors. Her public speaking instructor stayed after class to help her with speech topics, and her student development instructor discussed on-campus work-study opportunities.

Delany completed the *SuccessNavigator* assessment before she attended New Student Registration and Orientation during the spring of her senior year of high school. The results

indicated that Delany lacked self-management and needed to improve her stress management skills. She sought assistance with these areas from staff at IWCC. Delany has also made an effort to stay busy by participating in on-campus events and activities and has demonstrated strong help-seeking behavior by continually asking questions of faculty and staff.

Overall, Delany's first semester is going well. Although she is a little nervous about upcoming finals, she knows where to find resources that will help her succeed.



Improve student retention and completion rates as early as your next incoming class

www.ets.org/successnavigator

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