

NOVA's Achieving the Dream Core Team Meeting Handout

Part I. Overview of Achieving the Dream

Achieving the Dream (ATD) is a national initiative designed to support community colleges as they increase student achievement, particularly through the narrowing of equity gaps. The ATD model includes comprehensive and proficient supports, programs, and resources to assist ATD Network colleges in improving their student success metrics.

The customizable services provided by ATD are founded in seven institutional capacities, ranging from leadership and vision to teaching and learning; equity; and data and technology. Within this framework, ATD staff and coaches help colleges create a student-focused culture to increase the number of students who earn post-secondary credentials.

The ATD approach is comprehensive and provides focused support to targeted institutional capacities. ATD helps colleges identify emerging needs, review and utilize data, and develop solutions to improve practices.

Why is NOVA an ATD College?

- NOVA has benefitted from the organizational design; resources and support; and peer learning opportunities from the ATD Network.
- Utilizing the ATD coaching and resources, NOVA is constantly self-assessing the work around student achievement and identifying the institutional barriers that exist.
- NOVA has remained adaptive to change and benefitted from peer institutions across the nation.

NOVA's experience with ATD

NOVA joined Achieving the Dream (ATD) in 2007 and had many early achievements in the area of student success. By implementing Learning Communities, New Student Orientation, and the course redesigns of developmental math, English, and student development (SDV), NOVA demonstrated "sustained student success improvement," thus becoming and maintaining the ATD Leader College designation since 2010. ATD at NOVA has helped to implement several major initiatives to support student success, including the following:

- Learning Communities (LCs) – 2008
- New Student Orientation (NSO) – 2009
- First-Year Experience (FYE) – 2009
- Developmental English (Redesign) – 2013
- Developmental Math (Redesign) – 2013
- Revamping SDV – 2013
- Start Strong Initiative – 2014
- GPS for Success – 2014
- Financial Stability Program (FSP) – 2014

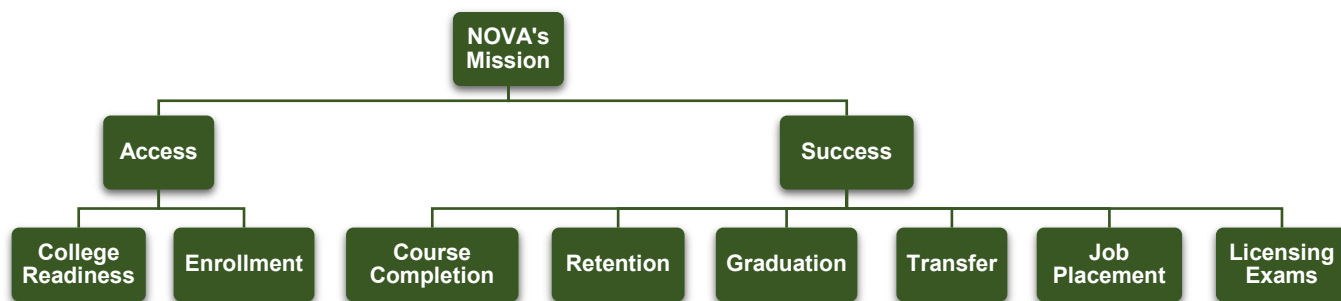
Through ATD, NOVA has been at the forefront of several initiatives, hosted numerous professional development events, and presented at national conferences. Almost every year since joining the ATD Network, NOVA has presented at the national ATD Conference, DREAM Conference.

Student Success at NOVA

NOVA evaluates student success in support of its mission¹ and strategic plan² using a number of measures. NOVA's student success criteria are derived from its mission, which is, "committed to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence." The college aims to provide students access to high-quality, post-secondary education in the Northern Virginia region, as well as to promote their success by preparing them to graduate, transfer, and enter the workforce with improved educational and labor market skills.

NOVA's eight primary student success criteria are College Readiness, Enrollment, Course Completion, Retention, Graduation, Transfer, Job Placement, and Licensing Exams. As illustrated in Figure 1, these student achievement criteria are directly related to NOVA's mission of access and success.

Figure 1. Student Success Criteria at NOVA



Moving Forward

- In the Fall 2019, the Senior Leadership made the bold decision to advance the student success agenda by revamping ATD at NOVA.
- Together, we will revitalize the ATD structure at NOVA to build a *Culture of Student Success* by sustainable transformation to move the needle.

¹ NOVA's Mission NOVA's Mission Statement: <http://www.nvcc.edu/mission/index.html>

² NOVA's Strategic Plan <https://www.nvcc.edu/mission/strategic-plan2017-2023.pdf>

Comparison of Student Achievement Criteria at NOVA and Peer Institutions

**Table 1. Comparison of Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates of First-Time, Program-Placed Students at NOVA and Peer Institutions by Enrollment Status:
Fall 2012 through Fall 2016 Cohorts**

Peer Institution	Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate (%)				
	Fall 2012 Cohort	Fall 2013 Cohort	Fall 2014 Cohort	Fall 2015 Cohort	Fall 2016 Cohort
Full-Time Students					
Montgomery College	68	69	78	76	75
Northern Virginia Community College	70	69	72	73	73
City College of San Francisco	68	70	67	72	72
Lone Star College System	62	65	62	68	67
Portland Community College	59	60	59	63	67
Houston Community College	61	56	62	66	65
Pima Community College	61	58	63	64	64
Tidewater Community College	60	59	60	60	61
Community College of Allegheny County	55	55	54	55	59
Cuyahoga Community College District	48	55	54	59	58
Austin Community College District	56	56	56	55	58
Central Piedmont Community College	56	55	56	54	55
Community College of Denver	53	53	49	52	55
Part-Time Students					
Montgomery College	47	48	57	53	55
Lone Star College System	52	51	48	49	53
Northern Virginia Community College	45	48	49	48	52
Austin Community College District	43	45	48	49	50
Central Piedmont Community College	53	42	40	45	49
Houston Community College	45	42	45	47	49
Portland Community College	46	44	43	49	47
Cuyahoga Community College District	34	38	37	40	46
City College of San Francisco	39	38	35	37	44
Community College of Allegheny County	41	43	41	44	42
Pima Community College	37	37	41	40	42
Community College of Denver	36	37	35	41	39
Tidewater Community College	36	37	38	36	38

Source: IPEDS. Note: Table sorted in descending order of Fall 2016 to Fall 2017 values.

**Table 2. Graduation Rates for NOVA and Peer Institutions:
Fall 2010 through Fall 2014 Cohorts**

Peer Institution	Graduation Rate (%)				
	Fall 2010 Cohort	Fall 2011 Cohort	Fall 2012 Cohort	Fall 2013 Cohort	Fall 2014 Cohort
Valencia College	40	44	44	43	41
City College of San Francisco	31	27	32	33	32
Miami Dade College	32	33	35	30	31
Northern Virginia Community College	23	23	23	24	25
Montgomery College	16	14	18	17	23
Tidewater Community College	14	13	16	19	20
Houston Community College	11	12	13	15	18
Central Piedmont Community College	12	11	13	16	17
Pima Community College	7	11	14	13	16
Cuyahoga Community College District	4	5	9	13	15

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Peer Institution	Graduation Rate (%)				
	Fall 2010 Cohort	Fall 2011 Cohort	Fall 2012 Cohort	Fall 2013 Cohort	Fall 2014 Cohort
Portland Community College	19	15	15	16	15
Community College of Allegheny County	9	11	12	14	14
Lone Star College System	11	10	8	10	12
Austin Community College District	6	8	7	9	11
Community College of Denver	10	10	13	15	10

Sources: OIR; IPEDS. Note: First-time in college, full-time, program-placed students graduating within 150 percent of normal time to completion. Table is sorted in descending order by Fall 2014 data.

**Table 3. Transfer-Out Rates at NOVA and Peer Institutions:
Fall 2010 through Fall 2014 Cohorts**

Peer Institution	Transfer-Out Rate (%)				
	Fall 2010 Cohort	Fall 2011 Cohort	Fall 2012 Cohort	Fall 2013 Cohort	Fall 2014 Cohort
Austin Community College District	32	30	36	39	42
Central Piedmont Community College	20	31	35	29	30
Cuyahoga Community College District	22	20	27	27	29
Community College of Allegheny Co.	25	24	24	28	24
Montgomery College	26	22	25	24	23
Houston Community College	22	22	24	23	22
Pima Community College	21	17	20	18	22
Lone Star College System	23	19	21	23	21
Portland Community College	15	15	15	17	20
Northern Virginia Community College	16	15	16	16	16
Valencia College	13	13	12	15	15
Tidewater Community College	15	17	15	14	14
City College of San Francisco	14	15	12	10	11
Community College of Denver	11	10	13	16	10
Miami Dade College	11	10	10	3	7

Sources: OIR; IPEDS. Note: For First-time in college, full-time, program-placed students who transfer out of NOVA within 150 percent of normal time to program completion. Table is sorted in descending order by Fall 2015 data.

Part II. Revamping ATD at NOVA

1. Build an Institutional Capacity

ATD has developed a comprehensive approach by utilizing ATD's Institutional Capacity Framework³ to address the emerging needs of the field to improve success. The Framework has seven essential capacities for colleges to create the student-focused culture that promotes student success (Figure 2, next page). The areas include the following.

- Leadership and Vision:** The commitment and collaboration of the institution's leadership with respect to student success and the clarity of the vision for desired change.

³ Institutional Capacity Framework and Assessment Tool
https://www.achievingthedream.org/sites/default/files/basic_page/atd_institutional_capacity_and_assessment_tool_2018.pdf

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- **Data and Technology:** The institution's capacity to collect, access, analyze, and use data to inform decision, and to use powerful technology to support student success.
- **Equity:** The commitment, capabilities, and experiences of an institution to equitably serve low-income students, students of color, and other at-risk student populations with respect to access, success, and campus climate.
- **Teaching and Learning:** The commitment to engaging full-time and adjunct faculty in examinations of pedagogy, meaningful professional development, and a central role for them as change agents within the institution. Also, the college's commitment to advising, tutoring, and out-of-classroom supports as well as restructuring developmental education to facilitate student learning and success.
- **Engagement and Communication:** The creation of strategic partnerships with key external stakeholders, such as K-12, universities, employers and community-based organizations, and internal stakeholders across the institution to participate in the student success agenda and improvement of student outcomes.
- **Strategy and Planning:** The alignment of the institution with the umbrella goal of student success and the institution's process for translating the desired future into defined goals and objectives and executing the actions to achieve them.
- **Policies and Practices:** The institutional policies and practices that impact student success and the processes for examining and aligning policies and practices to remove barriers and foster student completion.

Of the seven capacity areas, NOVA has focused on the following areas.

- **Leadership and Vision:** Within the last five years, NOVA has had three presidents. The first was a visionary who developed a strategic plan which prioritized student success and initiated participation in the ATD Network. The second, in a short-term, implemented large-scale changes including Guided Pathways, a new advising model, and the reorganization of the academic structure. NOVA's strategic plan is driven by directives that every student succeeds, every program achieves, and every community prospers. NOVA seeks to serve as the pathway to the American Dream, boosting the socio-economic mobility of its students and the surrounding region.
- **Data and Technology:** At NOVA, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success has published extensive student success data through reports and research briefs. Until recently, campus culture has prevented the use of data for informed decision making across the college. Change in presenting the data, including the use of infographics (e.g. *Spotlight* publication), an equity scorecard at the subunit level, and SACS-related institutional effectiveness data on student achievement have resulted in increased use of data. NOVA is beginning to utilize technology aimed at increasing student success, including Ad Astra Scheduling and Analytics.
- **Strategy and Planning:** NOVA is working to achieve its student success goal of socio-economic mobility through community partnerships designed to strengthen the local economy. NOVA has partnered with Micron Technology to create a state-of-the-art

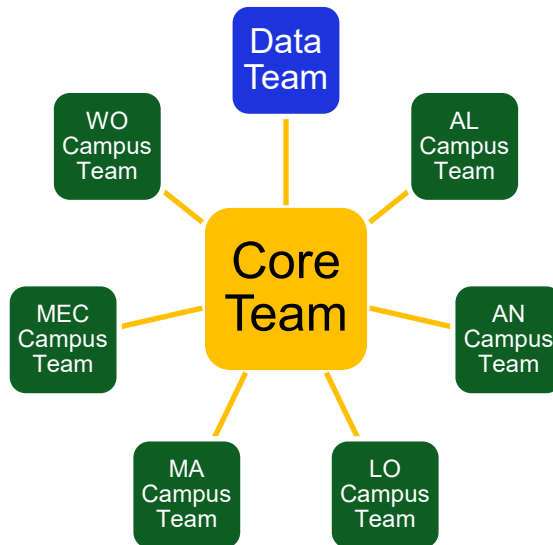
technology laboratory. Partnerships with Amazon provide paid apprenticeships and support a Cloud Computing specialization designed to support the regional workforce.

- **Policies and Practices:** NOVA has focused on introducing High Impact Practices since joining ATD. In 2014, NOVA implemented the Start Strong initiative which included six policy changes designed to increase student success. NOVA introduced a multiple measures placement policy in 2017 to better assess college readiness and to start students in college-level gatekeeper courses earlier. ADVANCE, a partnership with George Mason University, enables students to co-enroll at both institutions and provides clear program paths to ensure seamless accrual of credits in pursuit of both an associate and bachelor degree.
- **Teaching and Learning:** NOVA will focus on improving the college-wide Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). CETL is dedicated to assisting faculty and staff in improving the quality of teaching and learning services. CETL Faculty Advocates inspire, guide and mentor faculty in areas of pedagogy and classroom management.
- NOVA has also completed a redesign of its developmental education and student development courses. NOVA has strengthened its commitment to advising through the creation of new Advising Centers located on each campus.

2. New Organizational Structure: A Single Team

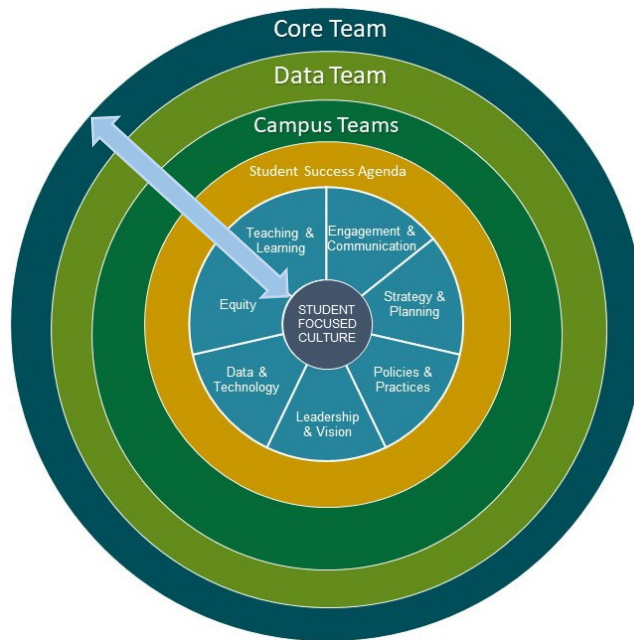
Previously, the ATD Core Team comprised of Campus Team chairs and a few other ATD stakeholders. Now the organizational structure of the Core Team includes more members from the college's senior leadership as well as more members from across the college. The charge of the ATD Core Team is to work collaboratively to develop and implement the mission of improving student success at NOVA. In addition, each of the six campuses have strengthened their ATD Campus Team membership.

Figure 2. ATD Organizational Structure/Single Team



Alignment between the ATD Core Team and the ATD Campus Teams is expected to seamlessly connect the teams with one vision and a single agenda to focus on retention, graduation, and transfer metrics for the college. The reorganized ATD Core Team and ATD Campus Teams will work collaboratively with the Data Team to develop and execute goals for the college. The ATD organizational structure is made of several parts but will function as a single team. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. ATD Single Team Structure



3. Vision for NOVA's ATD Teams

NOVA's ATD Team aims to overcome institutional barriers to student success by revitalizing the college's student-focused culture to promote:

- Teaching and Learning (academic services)
- Student supports (student services and LTR)
- Evidence (measure results / moving the needle)
- Equity (every student succeeds)

4. ATD Core Team Priorities

- Identify existing structures and systems at the college that impede student success
- Set institutional priorities to be completed by the campuses
- Review all policies and practices to identify barriers that inhibit student success
- Provide leadership to spread a culture of inquiry, reflection, and commitment to student success throughout the college
- Engage students, faculty, community members, and others in dialogue about the analysis and proposed goals and strategies

5. College-wide Goals for Student Success

NOVA's goal is to improve student success metrics.

- Select and implement high impact practices that improve student success with college-wide input
- Make an inclusive decision with a focus on students to implement college-wide
- Analyze results and make improvements

6. Operational Protocols

The ATD Core Team, with feedback from the Campus Teams, will create a student success agenda to achieve the target goals for three student success metrics; retention, graduation, and transfer. The ATD Core Team will make recommendations for policies, practices, and programs to the campuses. The ATD Campus Teams, with college support, will determine the implementation process for attaining the achievement goals and report back to the ATD Core Team. In addition to the focus on retention, graduation, and transfer, the ATD Teams will develop a flexible framework to incorporate the measures and metrics of outside advocacy bodies. The Teams will routinely clarify institutional policies and practices to remove institutional barriers to student success. In addition, the Teams will examine what is working and for whom to better understand circumstances for student success and for the closure of equity gaps.

7. Student Success Goals for 2021

NOVA seeks to increase the college's institutional capacity levels and link the work of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)⁴ accreditation process to the national ATD work and the college's strategic plan. Additionally, NOVA has begun to use predictive analytics models to support "at-risk" students before they decide to drop out. (Table 4, next page)

- **Retention:** By Fall 2021, the fall-to-spring retention rate for first-time, program-placed students will be no less than 83 percent, and the fall-to-fall retention rate will be no less than 67 percent.
- **Graduation:** By Fall 2021, the graduation rate will be no less than 27 percent (for the Fall 2018 entering cohort), and the total number of annual graduates in 2021-22 will be no less than 6,500.
- **Transfer:** By Fall 2021, the transfer-out rate will be no less than 18 percent (for the Fall 2018 entering cohort), and the annual number of students transferring to four-year institutions in 2021-22 will be no less than 12,300.

Part III. NOVA's Award Eligibility and Recognition

Presidential Charge:

The President has given the charge to prepare the college to be eligible and competitive for the Aspen Prize within the next 2 years. To do so, the college must be tracking and improving with the Aspen Prize metrics. (Table 5) Utilizing an example from Pierce College, peer ATD Network

⁴ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges <http://www.sacscoc.org/>

College, NOVA should look to increase retention beginning at the classroom level. (See article from The Chronicle of Higher Education)

The college hopes to significantly move the student success needle through student-focused work revitalized by the ATD Team. Such movement would allow NOVA to become eligible and apply for distinguishing awards provided by Achieving the Dream and The Aspen Institute.

Achieving the Dream

The Achieving the Dream National Network champions long-term and sustainable commitments to improving student success by encouraging network colleges to follow a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI, Table 4). These KPIs are used to support and evaluate the network colleges. ATD provides recognition for network colleges in the form of scholarships for students⁵ attending network institutions; classifications of colleges⁶ based on performance; and the most prestigious award, the Leah Meyer Austin Award⁷.

Table 4. ATD Key Performance Indicators⁸

#	Key Performance Indicators
1	Completion of Gateway Math and/or English in Year One
2	Persistence from Year One to Year Two (Fall-to-Fall Retention)
3	Courses attempted/completed with a grade of C or higher within one year of initial enrollment
4	Completion of a certificate or degree within three years of initial enrollment
5	Transfer metric and earned baccalaureate (B.A. or B.S.) degree within six years
6	Credit accumulation in first year
7	Zero credits earned in the first semester
8	Demonstrate, through disaggregation, the narrowing of equity gaps on at least two student characteristics (ethnicity, gender, income status, veteran status, first-generation, etc.)

The Aspen Institute

The Aspen Institute offers numerous programs relating to its mission, including its College Excellence Program.⁹ The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence honors one to two community colleges every two years with a \$1 million award. To award this esteemed prize, the Aspen Institute developed an intensive, three-round process to narrow down community colleges to determine the top performing colleges. Using nationally available data, Aspen begins the narrowing process with their team of experts, who review the top 150 community colleges identified as eligible for the award. The metrics in Table 5, next page, are used in Round 1 of the Aspen review process. These metrics will serve NOVA as a guide to move the student success needle.

⁵ ATD Scholarships for Students <https://www.achievingthedream.org/our-network/awards-recognition>

⁶ Leader College Distinction [cachievingthedream.org/leader-college-of-distinction](https://www.achievingthedream.org/leader-college-of-distinction)

⁷ Leah Meyer Austin Award <https://www.achievingthedream.org/awards-recognition/leah-meyer-austin-award>

⁸ Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Research Brief 20-19 *Streamlining Data Metrics at NOVA*

⁹ The Aspen Institute College Experience Program <http://highered.aspeninstitute.org/aspen-prize-program/selection-process/>

Table 5. Measures Used by The Aspen Institute for Selection and Eligibility¹⁰

#	Measures	Definitions and Calculations
1	First-Year Retention Rate	Percent of Fall first-time (full- and part-time) students returning the following Fall semester. The measure combines the most recent three years (2013, 2014, and 2015). Calculation: [(Still enrolled or completed Fall 2015, 2014, 2013) / (First-time fall 2014, 2013, 2012)]*100
2	Three-Year Graduation Rate	Percent of Fall first-time full-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates completing any formal award within 150% of normal program time or transferring out to another institution within 3 years. The measure combines the most recent three years available (2013, 2014, and 2015). Calculation: (Completers of any formal award within 150% of normal program time + transfer-outs by Summer 2013, 2014, and 2015) / (Fall 2010, 2011, and 2012 cohorts of first-time full-time undergraduates seeking any formal award)*100.
3	Undergraduate Credentials Awarded per 100 FTE Undergraduate Students	Undergraduate certificates of one year and more, associate and bachelor's degrees awarded per 100 full-time equivalent undergraduates. The measure combines the most recent three years (2013, 2014, and 2015). Calculation: [(undergraduate credentials awarded annually in 2014-15, 2013-14, and 2012-13) / (credit hour generated annual undergraduate enrollment 2014-15, 2013- 14, 2012-13)]*100
5	Change Over Time: Credentials Awarded per 100 FTE Students	Average annual percent increase in "undergraduate credentials awarded per 100 FTE undergraduate students" from 2010-11 to 2014-15.
6	Minority Three-Year Graduation Rate	Same calculation described above for the combination of Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans.
7	Minority Credentials Awarded per 100 FTE Undergraduate Students	Same calculation described above for the combination of Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans.
8	Median Family Income of Location	2015 median family income of the Census defined Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) where each college is located. In some cases, the defined PUMA for calculating median family income includes bordering PUMA's as well (densely populated inner city locations, or where an institution lies on the border of their defined PUMA). PUMAs are roughly 100,000 to 150,000 residents - smaller than counties in densely populated areas and larger than counties in sparsely populated rural areas.

¹⁰ Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Research Brief 20-19 *Streamlining Data Metrics at NOVA*

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Table 6 presents the integration of metrics from ATD and The Aspen Institute within the framework of NOVA's student success criteria. Using these metrics and the process for revamping ATD at NOVA will result in a better focus on the student success agenda at NOVA.

Table 6. NOVA's Comprehensive Student Success Agenda

#	Criteria	Measures / Metric	Definition / Calculation	Goal	Affiliates (accrediting / advocacy)
1	College Readiness	Math/English for credit placement	Percentage of students placed into developmental math and/or developmental English	By Fall 2021, the percentage of students placing into developmental math will be 35 percent and into developmental English will be 15 percent.	ATD #1
2	Enrollment	Number of students enrolled in credit courses	Measures of enrollment include the headcount of students enrolled in fall semester, and the unduplicated headcount of students enrolled at any time during the entire 12-month academic year (annual = summer, fall, and spring)	By Fall 2021, the fall semester student enrollment will be 55,000, and the annual enrollment will be 80,000.	
3	Course Success	Success in a credit-level course is defined as a grade of C or higher, and success in a developmental course is defined as a grade of S	Measures of course success include: Overall course success rates for the college Success in gatekeeper courses ¹¹ Success in developmental English courses Success in developmental math courses	By Fall 2021, the achievement goals for course success rates will be as follows: Overall Success: The overall course success rates for the college will be 76 percent. Gatekeeper Course Success: Gatekeeper course success rates will be 77 percent for ENG 111 and BIO 101, 69 percent for MTH 151 and ACC 211, and 60 percent for MTH 163. Developmental English Course Success: Developmental English course success rates will be 62 percent for ENF 1, 65 percent for ENF 2, and 73 percent for ENF 3.	ATD #3

¹¹ Gatekeeper courses are five college-level courses with high enrollment that are often critical to students' future success in college: ACC 211: Principles of Accounting I; BIO 101: General Biology I; ENG 111: College Composition I; MTH 151: Mathematics for the Liberal Arts I; MTH 163: Pre-Calculus I.

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#	Criteria	Measures / Metric	Definition / Calculation	Goal	Affiliates (accrediting / advocacy)
				Developmental Math Course Success: Developmental math course success rates will be 57 percent for MTT 1, 33 percent for MTT 2 and MTT3, and 20 percent for MTT 4.	
4	Retention	Fall-to-Fall Retention	The fall-to-fall retention rate is the percentage of first-time, program-placed (degree/certificate-seeking) students who enter in fall and either re-enroll or successfully complete their program by the following fall semester.	By Fall 2021, the fall-to-spring retention rate will be 85 percent, and the fall-to-fall retention rate will be 70 percent.	ATD #2 Aspen #1
5	Graduation	The College tracks: Graduation rates of first-time in college, full-time, program-placed students and The total number of annual graduates	The graduation rate is the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, program-placed (degree/certificate-seeking) students completing their program within 150 percent of normal time.	By Fall 2021, the graduation rate will be 30 percent, and the total number of annual graduates will be 6,800.	ATD #4 Aspen #2 Aspen #3 Aspen #5
6	Transfer	The college tracks: Transfer-out rates of first-time in college, full-time, program-placed students and the annual number of students who transfer to four-year institutions	The transfer-out rate is the percentage of first-time in college, full-time, program-placed (degree/certificate-seeking) students who transferred out of NOVA within 150 percent of normal time to program completion.	By Fall 2021, the transfer-out rate will be 20 percent, and the annual number of students transferring out to four-year institutions will be 12,500.	ATD #5
7	Job Placement	Employment data from the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)	The job placement rate is the percentage of graduates employed in the commonwealth of Virginia within one year of graduation from NOVA	By Fall 2021, the job placement rate will be 70 percent	
8	Licensing Exams	Passing a licensing exam demonstrates the level of knowledge and skill required to succeed in a profession, occupation, or role	The licensing exam pass rate is the percentage of graduates who pass the licensing exam for their program following graduation from NOVA	By Fall 2021, the licensing exam pass rate will be 100 percent	