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Student Success
Through Exceptional
Teaching

New Meta-Analysis Demonstrates “The ACUE Effect”: Quality Teaching Drives Significant and Positive Student Outcomes

Meta-analysis of impact studies involving hundreds of faculty and tens of thousands of students across eight diverse institutions indicates average student outcomes ACUE partners can expect: increased course completion rates, lower DFW rates, and higher grades

October 25, 2022 (New York, NY) - As higher education grapples with re-engaging students post-pandemic and inconsistent faculty development efforts, the [Association of College and University Educators \(ACUE\)](https://www.acue.org/)—the leader in student success and equity through quality instruction—announced today the findings of [a new meta-analysis](#) that further demonstrates student outcomes can be significantly improved through effective teaching.

The meta-analysis, which examines student impact studies from a range of institutional types that includes two-year and four-year colleges and universities, varying in size and geographic location, indicates the student outcomes ACUE partners can expect on average:

- 1 percentage point **increase in course completion rates**
- 3 percentage point **decrease in DFW rates**, and
- .06 point **increase in students’ average course grades** (on a 4.0 scale).

For perspective: if approximately all 16 million college students nationwide experienced high quality, evidence-based teaching, an additional 160,000 would successfully complete their courses and be more likely to persist into the next semester.

Earlier this year, ACUE’s research team partnered with Northwestern University’s Elizabeth Tipton, Ph.D., a leading scholar in the field of meta-analysis, with the aim of furthering higher education’s understanding of the impact effective teaching has on student outcomes.

“For leaders to make the best decisions for their campus and students, they need to have solid data available. This analysis provides the kind of evidence that should inform such important assessments about student success efforts,” **said Dr. Elizabeth Tipton, Northwestern University researcher and co-author of the meta-analysis.**

“We set out to estimate the average effect of ACUE faculty on student course outcomes. To do so, we employed meta-analysis, which statistically integrates and assesses the results of multiple studies. We found evidence of a positive average effect of ACUE and are now even more confident about the range of positive effects that we might expect from new partnerships. We look forward to continuing to produce high quality research that shows the impact of effective teaching on student outcomes,” **said Dr. Theo Pippins, ACUE’s senior research associate and co-author of the meta-analysis.**

“We are thrilled by what this meta-analysis makes clear: whether you lead a community college or an R1, great teaching has the power to change students’ lives. As we face unprecedented enrollment declines and continuing disparities in academic outcomes, ACUE can help institutions accelerate towards their student success and equity goals through the metrics that matter and with a proven strategy,” **said Scott Durand, ACUE’s chief executive officer.** “Today, ACUE partners can point to higher student retention and completion, better grades, lower DFW rates, and closed equity gaps—and we won’t rest until every student can benefit.”

To date, ACUE researchers and institutional partners have published [22 impact reports](#) which show that ACUE Certified faculty members retain more students, measurably improve student achievement, and close equity gaps by using evidence-based teaching approaches in the classroom. The new analysis reviewed 11 recent evaluations of the ACUE course, [Effective Teaching Practices](#), which ensures that faculty learn about—and implement—the approaches that improve student engagement and persistence and promote deeper learning.

The meta-analysis involved hundreds of faculty and tens of thousands of students, comprising eight diverse institutions, including: Broward College; City College of San Francisco; Miami Dade College; Purdue University Northwest; Texas Woman’s University; University of Arkansas – Pulaski Technical College; University of Nevada, Reno; and The University of Southern Mississippi.

Administrative and faculty leaders underscored the impact of their investment in effective teaching and how partnering with ACUE can accelerate any institution’s ability to meet or exceed their student success and equity goals.

“Broward College relentlessly seeks to elevate our faculty capacity and skills so that they can create a more inclusive learning environment and transform students’ lives, and the ACUE meta-analysis reveals just that,” **said Gregory Adam Haile, Broward College president.** “ACUE’s commitment to analyzing the effectiveness of its work aligns to Broward College’s data-driven decisions around resource allocation toward the things that will provide the best return on investment.”

“Impactful teaching and a commitment to faculty development in effective instructional practice is core to Broward College’s student success strategy, and our ongoing partnership with ACUE is essential to this critical strategy,” **said Dr. Jeffrey Nasse, Broward College provost and senior vice president for academic affairs.** “ACUE helps us prepare and support our great faculty with the evidence-based skills necessary to become the very best educators they can be and to foster a deeply connected community that effectively supports all of our students.”

“Our ACUE partnership has led to a real return on investment: higher student retention and course completion, lower DFW rates, and narrowing equity gaps. Today we are excited—but not surprised—to see that the positive impact on our campus is mirrored at a diverse array of campuses across the country. Regardless of school size or student body profile, good teaching has a powerful impact, and it needs to be at the heart of every college and university’s student success agenda,” **said Dr. Amy Chasteen, executive vice provost for academic affairs at The University of Southern Mississippi.**

“TWU has been working with ACUE for six years now, and we are thrilled that our first group of ACUE-credentialed faculty was able to close the course completion gap for African American students in 113 classes with 1,800 students, and that subsequent cohorts substantially increased our course completion rates while decreasing DFW rates,” **said, Dr. Jörg Waltje, executive director of the Center for Faculty Excellence at Texas Woman’s University.** “But there is more to the story than enriched student learning: participation in

ACUE's courses equipped our faculty with valuable skills that built their confidence, fostered overall job satisfaction, and enhanced their enjoyment of teaching—all factors that lastly contribute to a welcoming campus atmosphere and improved student success.

"Becoming ACUE Certified has been one of the most professionally fulfilling experiences of my life," **said Kirsten (Kiki) Heintz, faculty leader and instructor of Speech Communications at the University of Arkansas – Pulaski Technical College (UA-PTC).** "Today, with nearly all of our full-time faculty ACUE Certified, UA-PTC's investment in quality teaching is paying off for students and faculty. What the meta-analysis shows is exactly the kind of progress that UA-PTC is seeing on our campus: stronger achievement, lower DFWs, and narrowing equity gaps."

"Purdue University Northwest (PNW) partnered with ACUE in 2017 to promote the use of evidence-based instructional practices to support the success of PNW's diverse student population. Since then, more than 150 PNW instructors have participated in the course, and the findings from this study demonstrate the impact their participation is having on our students. PNW faculty are committed to giving students the best possible learning experience, and the ACUE course provides them with the instructional tools they need to set students up for success in their academic studies and future careers," **said Emily Hixon, Ph.D., director of the Center for Faculty Excellence and professor of education at Purdue University Northwest.**

About ACUE: The [Association of College and University Educators](#) (ACUE) is on a mission to accelerate student success, belonging, and equity through quality instruction. In partnership with colleges, universities, higher education systems and associations, ACUE prepares and credentials faculty in the evidence-based teaching practices that lead to higher retention and achievement, deeper learning, and the closing of equity gaps. Numerous and independently validated studies confirm that students are more engaged, learn more, and complete courses in greater numbers—more equitably with their peers—when taught by ACUE Certified faculty. ACUE's online, cohort-based credentialing programs are delivered through institutional partnerships and open enrollment courses endorsed by the American Council on Education.

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