

Completion rate interventions and innovations

Over the past six years, AC opened a counseling center, a legal aid clinic, a career and employment center, and a childcare center. We also launched an Advocacy and Resource Center, which houses a food pantry and connects students with social services provided by more than 60 local nonprofits.

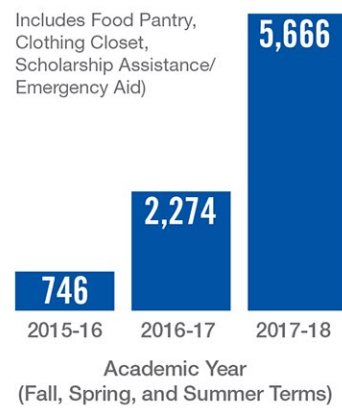


Poverty is the single greatest threat to higher education today. To counter the devastating effects of poverty on our community, AC implemented our culture of caring techniques. While we never expected to become advocates for removing poverty barriers, we know our culture of caring approaches are positively impacting the success of all our students. Our systems have changed the lives of our students and our students are impacting entire neighborhoods in our community.

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AC's culture of caring centers on humanity for all – students, faculty, and staff. We have restructured our entire college around our students' needs and removing the barriers to their success. *No Excuses 2020* reflects our resolve to being a higher education institution focused on meeting students' needs; student success and completion; and creating a data ecosystem to drive change.

Advocacy and Resource Center Total Student Visits



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Data makes a difference

AC employs data analytics to create systems to eradicate student poverty barriers while reducing time-to-degree using scaled accelerated learning systems. They include redesigned 8-week courses, embedded tutoring, scaled co-requisite developmental education, and career-focused advising pathways.

By building a social services system, we are significantly closing equity gaps by course, program, and degree. Socioeconomic status should never hinder a student's educational dreams. In 2012, AC began creating a cohesive system designed to address the top 10 barriers to success identified by our students. With the creation of the ARC, AC began utilizing our community nonprofits and their resources for our students. AC works with over 60 local nonprofits, who have federal/state/private funds, to help students meet basic needs that could potentially stop them from reaching their educational goals. In AY 18-19, AC social workers assisted 2,468 students (32% of our total enrollment) in over 5,300 visits.

In spring 2016, AC determined 77% of all students take 26 specific courses each semester. To date, 95% of these courses have been redesigned to an 8-week format. By transitioning courses to a shorter time frame with the same amount of contact hours, students are able to register for two 8-week courses in term I and two 8-week classes in term II (fall, spring and summer semesters). This approach allows students to enroll full-time. In fall 2019, 45% of AC students were full-time versus 30% in fall 2015.

By moving students from part-time to full-time, we ease financial burdens because students have access to more financial aid and scholarships. Our data indicates students who complete 24 hours in the first year are substantially more likely to reach their educational dreams. Additionally, required embedded tutoring in the 26 courses ensures a shorter time-to-degree. We aren't just accelerating learning, we are deepening it as well. By redesigning our academic systems and courses to reduce time-to-degree, our students are completing more credit hours each academic year and graduating/transferring in less time.



CHAPTER 3

Chronicle of Higher Education Feature



A Culture of Caring

Amarillo College's 'No Excuses' program for low-income students has made it a national model



In the spring of 2019 Amarillo College was featured in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The results that came from our transformation as a culture of caring were garnering national attention and as a result *Chronicle* reporters came calling.

Access the online story here:



As an X-ray technologist, Cindy Lopez expects to earn \$15-\$16 an hour at first, with a pathway toward higher pay as time goes on. Photos courtesy of *The Chronicle*.

