POLICY BRIEF

Bringing CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) to Ohio

Early Findings from a Demonstration in Three Community Colleges

By Colleen Sommo and Alyssa Ratledge

The need to boost low community college graduation rates has come into national focus in recent years. Community colleges serve seven million undergraduates annually, a disproportionate number of whom come from disadvantaged communities. Yet among full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students entering public two-year schools, only 20 percent graduate within three years — even though that is a year more than what is considered "normal" for an associate's degree.[1] Low graduation rates are especially pronounced among low-income students, nontraditional students, and students who enter college without the math, reading, or writing skills required for college-level courses and who thus need to take developmental (remedial) courses.

In 2014, three community colleges in Ohio — Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, and Lorain County Community College — set out to address their low-income students' needs thoughtfully and comprehensively. Mirroring national trends, graduation rates in these colleges had remained low despite strides made in access. Ready to undertake a new strategy to help students succeed, these colleges turned to a proven-effective program: CUNY ASAP, or Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, developed by the City University of New York.

This brief describes the ASAP demonstration in Ohio and the programs implemented by these three schools. Early findings from the evaluation show that the Ohio programs substantially increased first-semester full-time enrollment and credit accumula-

tion, as well as persistence and full-time enrollment in the second semester.

CUNY ASAP: A PROVEN MODEL FOR SUCCESS

CUNY ASAP is an uncommonly multifaceted, integrated, and long-lasting program for community college students, providing an array of services and support to help more students graduate and to help them graduate sooner. The program aims to address multiple barriers to student success over three full years. ASAP requires students to enroll full-time and take developmental courses immediately and continuously; offers comprehensive support services such as high-touch advisement, career development, and tutoring; offers financial support that includes tuition waivers for students in receipt of financial aid, textbook vouchers, and monthly MetroCards for use on public transportation; and provides structured course enrollment to support academic momentum, with block and consolidated course schedules and support for course-taking in winter and summer sessions.[2] ASAP represents both an opportunity and an obligation for students, as they must continue enrolling full time and participating in the program to receive the program's benefits.

CUNY, the largest urban public university system in the country, created ASAP with the goal of doubling the graduation rate of its community college students, making the program one of the most ambitious efforts in the country to improve the success rates of low-income, associate's degree-seeking students. And that ambition has

been realized: MDRC's random assignment evaluation of CUNY ASAP, looking at two co-horts from three community colleges in the system, found that after three years, 40 percent of ASAP program group students had graduated, compared with just 22 percent of control group students.[3] This is especially remarkable considering that all the students in MDRC's study were low-income and in need of one or two developmental education courses, student populations known to lag behind their peers in academic progress. ASAP's impacts on graduation rates are unparalleled among experimental evaluations in higher education. CUNY's ongoing internal evaluation has found that ASAP continues to graduate exceptionally high percentages of students, even as the program expands to greater numbers of students and across more CUNY campuses.[4]

Given these unprecedented findings, MDRC and CUNY partnered to disseminate information about ASAP and explore bringing the ASAP model to other states and colleges. MDRC's evaluation of the ASAP demonstration in Ohio will test the extent to which the model can be replicated in colleges and locations outside New York City, and whether its effects are similar in new contexts and when serving different student populations. The box on page 3 discusses the choice of Ohio.

ASAP DEMONSTRATION IN OHIO

Three Ohio colleges are taking part in the demonstration:

- **Cincinnati State Technical and Community College:** Cincinnati State is a medium-sized college serving urban Cincinnati and its surrounding area, including Appalachian Ohio and Kentucky. The college serves a racially and geographically diverse population of 10,000 students. Half of Cincinnati State's students are age 25 or older and two-thirds enroll in school part time, reflecting the nontraditional student population the college serves. Cincinnati State's program is called C State Accelerate (CSA).

- **Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C):** Tri-C is a large, multicampus college serving Cleveland and its suburbs. Ohio's first community college, Tri-C serves a highly diverse population of 27,000 students, with two-thirds of its students enrolling in school part time. Two of Tri-C's four campuses are participating in the demonstration: East, in Highland Hills, a majority-minority campus that tends to serve a greater proportion of nontraditional students from downtown Cleveland, and West, in Parma, which tends to serve a more traditional student population. Tri-C's program is called Degree in Three (D3).

- **Lorain County Community College:** Lorain is a medium-sized college located in the small city of Elyria in northern Ohio. Lorain's student population of 11,000 includes a wide variety of urban, suburban, and rural students from multiple counties. While Lorain's average student age is a bit younger than the other two schools', it too serves a significant percentage of nontraditional students, and more than 70 percent of students enroll in school part time. Lorain's program is called Students Accelerating in Learning (SAIL).

HOW WERE THE PROGRAMS CREATED?

MDRC built a funding consortium to support the demonstration. Funding was to be used for seed capital to the colleges to support the programs, for evaluation and dissemination, and for technical assistance provided by CUNY. The Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation provided anchor funding supplemented with grants from a group of other higher education philanthropies, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Haile U.S. Bank Foundation, KnowledgeWorks, the Kresge Foundation, and the Lumina Foundation. To ensure that the programs would be sustainable over the long term, the colleges committed to an escalating match structure in which they absorb an increasing proportion of program costs, typically through a combination of fundraising, in-kind contributions, and reallocation of existing resources at the college. This way,

should the programs' impacts on students' academic outcomes be positive, the program would continue to serve students beyond the length of the study. The annual incremental costs of the Ohio programs are estimated to be less than $3,000 per student.

Once this initial funding was secured, the colleges undertook a yearlong planning and piloting process to prepare for study launch. Staff members at all three of the colleges in the evaluation came to the demonstration passionate about student success and with a good handle on the issues their low-income students faced, making the schools good candidates for implementing their own programs based on ASAP. They also had sufficient data capacity and infrastructure to take on the critical data collection and program management element of ASAP. Still, start-up for such a complex program model was demanding. This intensive process included securing commitment to the program from leaders in numerous offices within the college, identifying key staff positions and hiring staff members specifically for the program, securing space on campus for the program to be housed, determining how to put each program component into operation, setting up processes to ensure smooth operation for students, and recruiting students for a spring 2015 pilot.

CUNY and MDRC provided start-up assistance during this period. CUNY provided technical assistance throughout the first year of program operations to support program implementation, ensured a thorough understanding of ASAP, and answered staff questions as they arose. To help oversee the process, the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE, formerly known as the Ohio Board of Regents) took on a coordinating role to form an Ohio ASAP Network to share knowledge among senior leaders and program staff members across the three colleges.[5] During the spring 2015 pilot period, CUNY, MDRC, and ODHE worked with the colleges to strengthen program components as needed to ensure the program operated as desired for the full evaluation launch in fall 2015.

WHY OHIO?

At CUNY, ASAP proved to be extremely effective in meeting students' needs and helping them get to graduation. A natural next question was whether such a program could achieve similar results in a different environment and with a different population of students. Ohio mirrors the United States in ways that New York City may not. For example, Ohio reflects national community college trends in serving large populations of nontraditional students and drawing students from a variety of urban, suburban, and rural areas. And while CUNY is a highly centralized university system, Ohio has a decentralized structure, like that found in many other states. The Ohio Department of Higher Education creates policy and coordinates initiatives across the colleges, but the colleges operate independently and almost all decision-making is internal — so understanding how a program like ASAP can operate within it will be instructive.

In addition, just before the programs were launched, Ohio became a 100 percent performance-based funding state. This meant that colleges' performance on key student outcome metrics was to inform the state funding formula in significant and, at the time, unforeseen ways. As a result, the colleges were looking for proven approaches to increase student success and were receptive to programs that would make substantial changes to "business as usual."

How Does the Ohio Program Model Compare with the CUNY ASAP Model?

All three colleges in the Ohio demonstration modeled their programs' services after CUNY ASAP and strove to achieve the same goal of doubling graduation rates. While a few program components had to be adjusted to meet the local context, the goal was to come as close to ASAP as possible. Table 1 presents the two program models side by side for comparison. (Note that Table 1 reflects the CUNY ASAP model as it was at the time the Ohio colleges began their planning period, rather than the version evaluated by MDRC. CUNY continues to refine the program over time as it expands to serve more students.)

TABLE 1. CUNY ASAP AND OHIO PROGRAM MODELS

CUNY ASAP	Ohio Programs
REQUIREMENTS AND MESSAGES	
• **Full-time enrollment:** Required in fall and spring. Summer and winter attendance encouraged and financially covered. • **Taking developmental courses early:** Encouraged consistently and strongly. • **Graduating within three years:** Encouraged consistently and strongly.	• **Full-time enrollment:** Required in fall and spring. Summer attendance encouraged and financially covered. • **Taking developmental courses early:** Encouraged consistently and strongly. • **Graduating within three years:** Encouraged consistently and strongly.
STUDENT SERVICES	
• **Advising:** Students required to visit adviser twice per month in first semester and as directed based on need after that. Caseloads of no more than 150. • **Career services:** Students required to participate in an activity with an ASAP career specialist or an approved event through career services once per semester. • **Tutoring:** Students required to attend tutoring if taking developmental courses, if identified as struggling by faculty/adviser, or if on academic probation.	• **Advising:** Students required to visit adviser twice per month in first semester and as directed based on need after that. Caseloads of no more than 125. • **Career services:** Students required to meet with campus career services staff or participate in an approved career services event once per semester. • **Tutoring:** Students required to attend tutoring if taking developmental courses, if identified as struggling by faculty/adviser, or if on academic probation.
FINANCIAL SUPPORT	
• **Tuition waiver:** Any difference between financial aid and tuition and fees is waived. • **Monthly incentive:** Monthly unlimited-ride MetroCard, contingent on participation. • **Textbook assistance:** Voucher to cover textbook costs through the campus bookstore.	• **Tuition waiver:** Any difference between financial aid and tuition and fees is waived. • **Monthly incentive:** Monthly $50 gas/grocery gift card, contingent on participation. • **Textbook assistance:** Voucher to cover textbook costs through the campus bookstore.
COURSE ENROLLMENT	
• **Blocked courses and consolidated schedules:** Course sections reserved and seats held in specific sections of general or developmental education courses for ASAP students during the first year. Early registration for ASAP students. • **ASAP seminar:** Students attend an ASAP-only student success seminar during their first year.	• **Blocked courses and consolidated schedules:** Seats held in specific sections of general or developmental education courses for program students during the first year. Early registration for program students. • **First-year seminar:** New students required to take a student success course in the first semester, ideally in a section with other program students.
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	
• **Program management:** CUNY Academic Affairs provides overall administration and evaluation and supports college programs, which deliver direct student services. • **Dedicated staffing:** Fully ASAP-dedicated staff led by a director who reports to the college's chief academic officer.	• **Program management:** Managed locally within each college, with periodic convenings and data sharing among the Ohio ASAP Network. • **Dedicated staffing:** Fully dedicated program staff led by a director who reports to the provost or another senior leader at the college.

SOURCES: Program model information from the City University of New York (CUNY) and the Ohio demonstration colleges.

As Table 1 illustrates, the models are substantially similar. The focus on full-time enrollment, immediate and continuous developmental course-taking, and three-year graduation remain; the only change to requirements and messages is the elimination of winter enrollment, as none of the three Ohio colleges offer winter session courses. Likewise, the robust student service offerings are all part of the Ohio model, with comprehensive and intrusive advising, low advising caseloads, and requirements for tutoring and career service visits. Structured course

enrollment was modeled on CUNY ASAP; programs hold seats in specific course sections and ensure early registration for students. Rather than creating a special seminar course for the program, Ohio program staff members decided to enroll program students in specified sections of existing student success courses.

The financial support consisting of a tuition waiver and textbook assistance in the Ohio model closely mirrors that of ASAP. However, finding an analogous monthly incentive was a challenge for the Ohio schools. While a MetroCard makes a salient incentive in New York City, where nearly everyone uses public transportation, no one card could address the variety of transportation needs that Ohio's students have. Instead, the three colleges offer $50 gift cards for use at local gas and grocery store chains. This allows students to offset some of their transportation costs if they drive or carpool to school, while still providing a benefit to students who take public transportation — namely, assistance in buying groceries or other necessities at a local store.[6] But the value of these cards is considerably less than an unlimited MetroCard both financially (a monthly MetroCard costs $116.50) and logistically (this incentive will not *completely* cover transportation costs for most students).

A notable difference between CUNY ASAP and the Ohio model is the program management and oversight structure. Program management — including oversight, data collection, reporting, and iterative improvement — has been critical to ASAP's success, and it is emphasized in both models. At CUNY, much of this responsibility is handled centrally by a dedicated ASAP team in the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, in partnership with the colleges. Since Ohio's colleges and universities have decentralized governance, with local boards for each college, the Ohio programs implemented a local data collection and management structure, with college leaders providing program oversight. Just as in CUNY ASAP, though, the Ohio programs hired dedicated staff members who work only with the program and their students.

As described below, part of the research study in the Ohio demonstration involves investigating the degree to which the Ohio colleges' programs were implemented as designed. A future report will look at this question. Of importance for the findings presented here, however, is that all three colleges were able to implement most program components before the start of the fall 2015 semester. Ongoing technical assistance and program improvement feedback from CUNY and MDRC continued throughout the 2015-2016 school year to strengthen the program.

WHAT IS THE EVALUATION EXAMINING?

The Ohio ASAP demonstration project aims to determine whether three community colleges in Ohio can successfully implement programs modeled after CUNY ASAP and to evaluate the effectiveness of the program on student academic outcomes. Specifically, the evaluation will answer the following key questions:

- How do the Ohio programs compare with CUNY ASAP? How were the Ohio programs put into effect, to what degree were they implemented with fidelity to the model, and to what extent was there a difference in services received between the program and control groups?

- What is the effect of the Ohio programs on academic performance, and do the effects vary across student populations and settings? Are the results of the Ohio demonstration consistent with the results of the CUNY ASAP evaluation?

- What are the costs associated with the Ohio programs, are the programs cost-effective, and is the model financially sustainable?

The evaluation is using a random assignment design. Eligible, interested individuals were randomly assigned either to a program group, whose members have the opportunity to participate in the Ohio programs, or to a

5

control group, whose members cannot participate in these programs but have the opportunity to participate in all of their college's usual offerings and services. The academic outcomes for the program group and control group will be compared over time to estimate the impact, or "value added," of the Ohio programs. Because the two groups of students are similar at the outset, later meaningful differences in outcomes can be attributed with confidence to the program.

Both groups of students will be tracked for at least three years to estimate the effects on persistence, full-time enrollment, credits earned, and degree attainment. This report examines impacts during students' first and second semesters in the study based on student transcripts provided by the participating colleges.

WHO IS IN THE EVALUATION?

The Ohio programs targeted students who met the following criteria: They were low-income (Pell eligible), college-ready or in need of developmental education,[7] degree seeking, willing to attend full time, and in a major where a degree can be completed within three years. Students could be new to the college or continuing students with up to 24 credits.

Students were randomly assigned for the study in three groups, or cohorts: one before the spring 2015 semester,[8] another before fall 2015, and another before spring 2016. Before each semester, college advisers and other staff members contacted eligible students to describe the program and research activities related to the demonstration. Students who agreed to participate in the study filled out a baseline questionnaire, signed an informed consent form, and were randomly assigned to either the program group or the control group. Eligible consenting students had at least a 50 percent chance of being assigned to the program group. The study includes approximately 1,500 students.

Table 2 presents selected baseline characteristics of the sample members in the study, both by college and overall. (For more information

on characteristics, see Supplementary Tables S.1 and S.2, available online.)[9] It is important to note that about half the students in the sample are considered nontraditional, often a risk factor for postsecondary success,[10] based on being age 24 or older, working full time, having children, or not having earned a high school diploma. Cincinnati State has the largest portion of nontraditional students, at roughly 6 out of 10 students, mainly due to the college's higher proportion of older students and parents. Across the three colleges, 60 percent of the sample were employed at the time of study intake, with about a quarter of those working full time. In addition, the research sample is racially and ethnically diverse: Approximately 54 percent of the students identified themselves as Hispanic, black, Asian, multiracial, Native American, or "other."

Compared with the CUNY ASAP evaluation sample, students in the Ohio sample are somewhat older (average age 23.1 compared with 21.5), are more likely to be parents (27.0 percent versus 15.3 percent), and are twice as likely to be working (60.0 percent versus 31.3 percent).[11] Given the differences in populations, this evaluation will help answer questions about ASAP's viability in different institutions, including those serving predominantly nontraditional students.

EARLY FINDINGS

This brief presents academic data for the spring 2015 and fall 2015 cohorts, which comprise 921 students, or approximately 60 percent of the full study sample. The follow-up period is limited to students' first semester after being randomly assigned and their preliminary registration data for the second semester, and includes data from the school of study intake only.[12] For the spring 2015 cohort, the first semester includes enrollment and credit information from spring 2015 and summer 2015. For the fall 2015 cohort, the first semester is fall 2015. These early findings show that students who were offered the program had better short-term outcomes, including positive effects on enrolling full time, earning more credits, and persisting into the second semester.

TABLE 2. SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE MEMBERS AT BASELINE

CHARACTERISTIC (%)	FULL SAMPLE	CINCINNATI STATE	LORAIN	TRI-C
AGE				
19 years or younger	47.6	29.5	57.5	54.0
20 to 23 years	21.7	26.3	17.3	21.9
24 years or older	30.7	44.2	25.1	24.1
RACE/ETHNICITY[a]				
Hispanic	9.6	3.1	16.7	8.2
White	45.9	34.3	55.5	46.4
Black	34.8	51.4	19.0	36.0
Other[b]	9.7	11.1	8.8	9.4
Female	63.9	62.5	65.9	63.1
Currently employed	60.0	62.1	59.3	58.8
Married	8.5	9.9	8.5	7.3
Has any children	27.0	35.2	26.2	20.4
First person in family to attend college	33.9	36.4	30.8	34.7
Nontraditional student[c]	46.8	58.6	39.4	43.6
SAMPLE SIZE	1,505	468	513	524

SOURCE: MDRC calculations using baseline information form data.

NOTES: Tri-C = Cuyahoga Community College.
   Distributions may not add to 100 percent because of rounding.
   Missing values are included in variable distributions only for characteristics with more than 6 percent of the full sample missing. This does not apply to any characteristics in this table.
   [a]Respondents who said they are Hispanic and chose a race are included only in the "Hispanic" category.
   [b]The "Other" category includes Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaska Native, multiracial, and other races and ethnicities.
   [c]Nontraditional students are defined as those who were 24 or older, worked 35 or more hours per week, had children, or did not receive a high school diploma and were not enrolled in high school at the time of random assignment. Students are listed as nontraditional if they fit any of these characteristics. Students are considered to be missing in the nontraditional category if they were missing two or more of these variables and have no other nontraditional characteristic; less than 6 percent of the study sample falls into this category.

OHIO PROGRAMS BOOST ENROLLMENT AND CREDIT ATTAINMENT

Figure 1 illustrates enrollment and full-time enrollment for the first two semesters. In the first semester, the program and control groups enrolled in one or more courses at similar rates. This was expected, as the programs targeted students who were already matricu-lated at the college. However, students in the program group were much more likely to enroll in school full time (defined as enrolling in 12 or more credits). The estimated impact is 17.6 percentage points, or a 26 percent increase over the control group average of 67.0 per-cent. This result is noteworthy, given that both groups had agreed to attend full time before

FIGURE 1. OHIO PROGRAMS BOOST ENROLLMENT
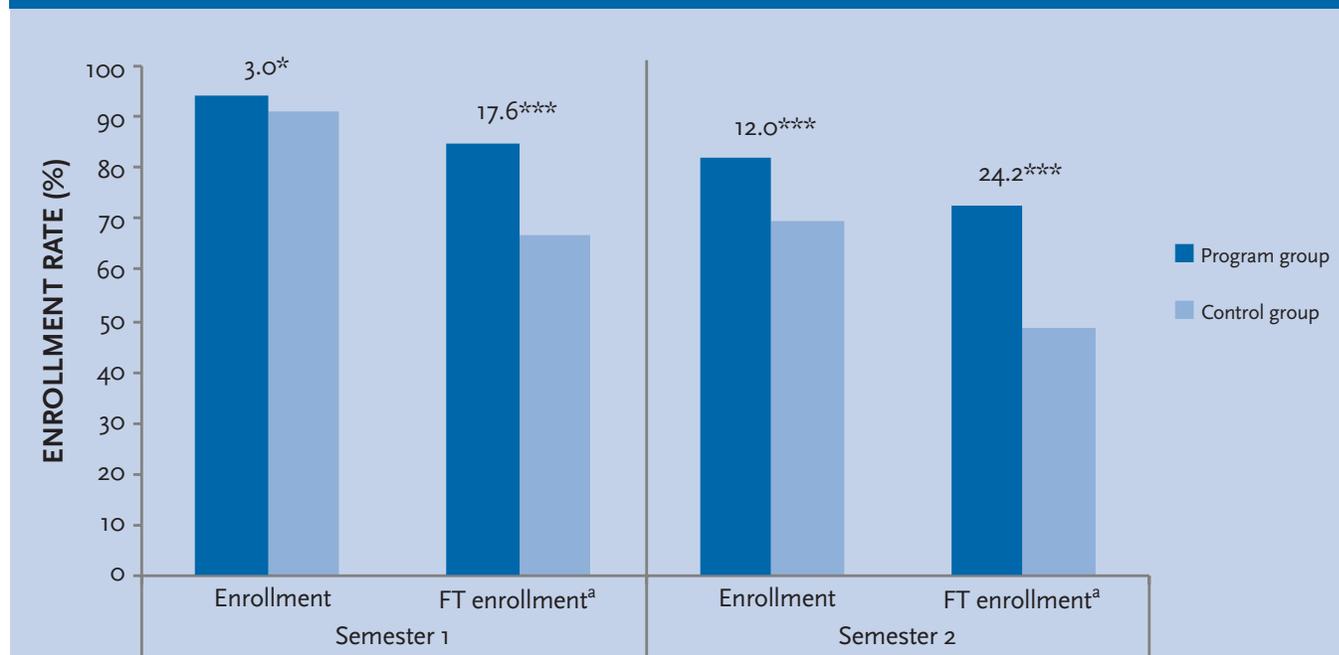
SOURCE: MDRC calculations using transcript data from the demonstration colleges.

NOTES: FT = full-time.
   Estimates are for cohorts 1 and 2 only, a total of 921 students.
   Outcomes are based on courses in which students are still enrolled as of the end of the add/drop period.
   A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between research groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
   Estimates are adjusted by site, cohort, gender, intended enrollment level, parental status, marital status, weekly hours worked, dependence on parents for 50 percent or more financial support, whether student is the first family member to attend college, and whether student earned a high school diploma.
   [a]Full-time enrollment is defined as enrollment in 12 or more credits.

random assignment; without the program's support, many more control group students quickly dropped to part-time status. Moreover, this finding demonstrates that there is a sizable group of students who currently enroll part time but who, if given the right set of require- ments and support, will attend school full time.

In the second semester, there is a large, 12.0 percentage point impact on persistence: 81.7 percent of the program group enrolled in one or more courses compared with 69.7 percent of the control group. The impact on full-time enrollment continued and increased in this semester to 24.2 percentage points, or a 50 percent increase over the control group average of 48.4 percent.

Figure 2 presents credits attempted and earned. In the first semester, students in the program group attempted and earned 1.4 more credits, on average, than the control group. This pair of findings is important, as

it shows that students in the program group were able to manage their increased course load. In the second semester, the impact on credits attempted grows to 2.3 credits and represents an increase of 28 percent over the control group level of 8.2 credits. (See Supplementary Table S.3, available online, for a summary of early impacts.)

How Do the Effects of the Ohio Programs Compare with the Effects of CUNY ASAP?

CUNY has achieved unparalleled effects on academic outcomes, including persistence, credit accumulation, and degree comple- tion, for its ASAP students. Like the CUNY ASAP findings, the early impacts in Ohio are among the largest MDRC has found in higher education evaluations. The sizes of the impacts are comparable, though the es- timates themselves vary some. For example, CUNY's control group enrolled at higher rates and earned more credits than did the

FIGURE 2. OHIO PROGRAMS INCREASE CREDITS ATTEMPTED AND EARNED
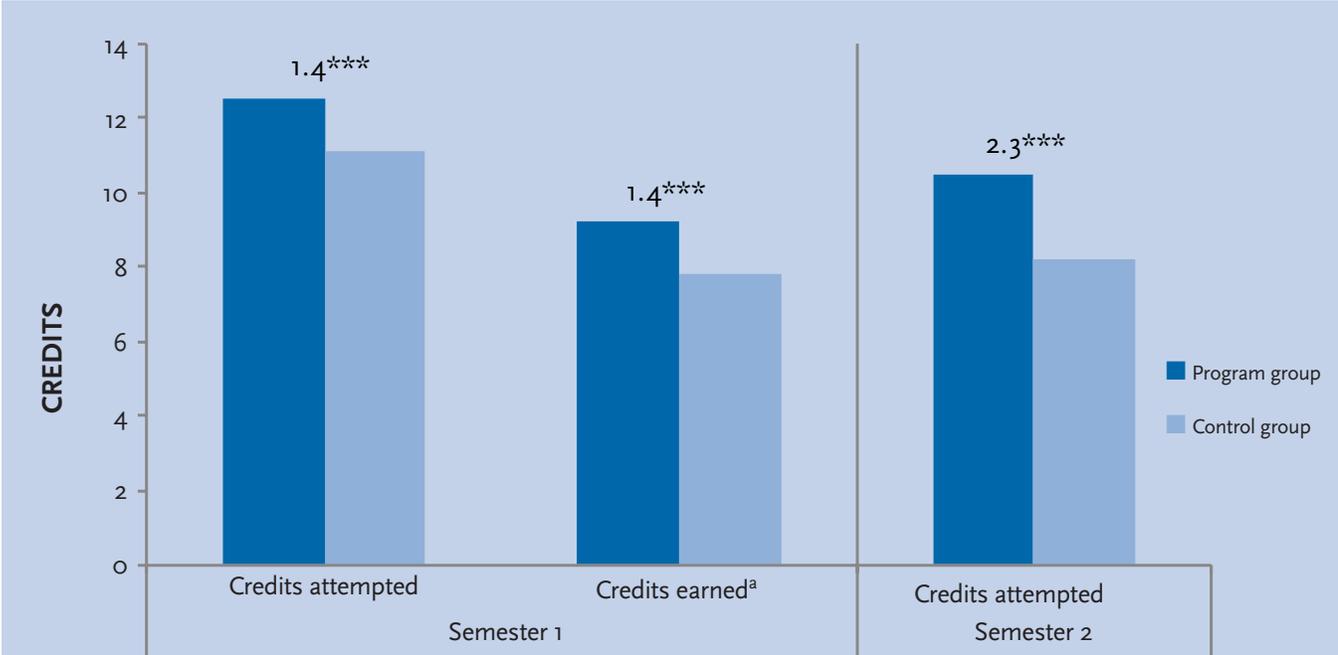
SOURCE: MDRC calculations using transcript data from the demonstration colleges.

NOTES: Estimates are for cohorts 1 and 2 only, a total of 921 students.
 A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between research groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.
 Estimates are adjusted by site, cohort, gender, intended enrollment level, parental status, marital status, weekly hours worked, dependence on parents for 50 percent or more financial support, whether student is the first family member to attend college, and whether student earned a high school diploma.
 [a]Measures of credits earned do not exclude courses passed more than once.

control group in Ohio. These differences may be a result of differences in the types of students served across the two evaluations, as well as different structures, resources, services, and activities offered to students outside of the program.

Estimates of the short-term impacts for the first two cohorts of the Ohio programs are quite similar to those observed in MDRC's evaluation of CUNY ASAP. For example, the Ohio program's estimated effects on persistence to the second semester (12.0 percentage points) and full-time enrollment in the second semester (24.2 percentage points) are strikingly similar to CUNY ASAP's effects on the same outcomes (10.3 and 20.4 percentage points, respectively). Both programs also had sizable impacts on full-time enrollment during the first program semester.

Like CUNY ASAP, the Ohio programs have also produced a large effect on first-semester

credit accumulation. The magnitude of this estimated effect in Ohio is somewhat smaller than at CUNY (1.4 credits versus 2.1 credits). That said, the difference between these estimated effects is not statistically discernible by conventional standards. The somewhat smaller estimated effect on credits earned in Ohio may be caused, in part, by the lack of availability of a winter intersession. A comparison of the effects on credits earned in the main fall or spring sessions only (excluding summer and winter courses) show more comparable effect estimates (1.2 credits in Ohio versus 1.5 credits in CUNY). This structural scheduling difference may prove to be an important contrast between the Ohio and CUNY contexts, and the study will continue to examine effects with and without intersessions.

The Ohio programs' early effects on academic outcomes for the first two cohorts are very promising. As the programs are designed to provide students with comprehensive sup-

port for three years, it will be important to see whether the early success in Ohio translates into large effects on three-year graduation rates, as has been the case in CUNY ASAP.

WHAT'S NEXT?

MDRC's evaluation will continue tracking longer-term academic data. In addition, the evaluation will examine the implementation of the Ohio programs, including fidelity to the model and the key differences between the programs and standard college services, and analyze the cost-effectiveness of the Ohio programs.

CUNY ASAP's impact on student success is so convincing that the City of New York has made a significant investment in the program's expansion across CUNY. In the 2018-2019 school year, ASAP will enroll 25,000 students, representing approximately 50 percent of all incoming first-time, full-time associate's degree-seeking students.

All three Ohio colleges are acting on their programs' results, too, bringing in a new fall 2016 cohort, both to continue serving their students and to ensure that the infrastructure for their programs remains intact. In addition, there is interest in bringing more Ohio colleges into the Ohio ASAP Network, so that programs based on the ASAP model can reach students across the state. Lessons from CUNY ASAP have already begun to inform decision making at the state level: Beginning in 2016, Ohio's state need-based financial aid program, the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG), has been reinstated for community college students who have exhausted their Pell grants and want to enroll in a third term in an academic year (for instance, enrolling in summer courses). OCOG will provide these students with partial tuition coverage to attend during this term. This policy change will make it easier for students — in the Ohio ASAP demonstration and beyond — to continue enrolling and accumulating credits outside the fall and spring semesters.

Beyond Ohio, and with support from the Gates Foundation, MDRC and CUNY are con-

ducting broad outreach and targeted reconnaissance efforts to build interest in and assess capacity for implementation of the ASAP model among higher education policymakers and practitioners across the country.

CONCLUSION

The Ohio programs' early effects on students' academic outcomes are very promising and raise the prospect of continued success as students progress through their college careers. Just as noteworthy, these impacts demonstrate that colleges attempting to implement a program based on CUNY ASAP can be successful. It is important to note that the colleges in this study have support from their senior leadership; have champions on the ground, such as the program's dedicated staff; have devoted substantial time to planning and piloting the programs; and have received significant technical assistance from CUNY and operational support from MDRC. Implementing programs based on CUNY ASAP is a major undertaking, but as shown in this brief, early findings demonstrate that these programs can dramatically improve academic outcomes for low-income community college students.

NOTES

1 Snyder, de Brey, and Dillow (2016).

2 For more detail about CUNY ASAP components and implementation, see City University of New York Office of Academic Affairs (2015).

3 Scrivener et al. (2015).

4 For more information, see City University of New York (2016).

5 Another goal of the Ohio ASAP Network is to inform the other 20 community colleges in the state about the experiences of these 3 colleges, with the intention of expanding the program to other schools.

6 Each college offers gift cards to a different store. Each selected a chain that is ubiquitous in the local area and relevant to students.

7 Two of the colleges define students meeting the developmental education criterion as those who have no more than two developmental course needs, and the third defines them as students who can complete their developmental course work within one year.

8 One college enrolled, and randomly assigned, a small number of students (n = 70) into the study

in spring 2015. During this semester, the other two colleges conducted pilots, without random assignment, and those students are not included in the research sample.

9 Supplementary Tables S.1 to S.3 can be found in Colleen Sommo and Alyssa Ratledge, "Bringing CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) to Ohio: Supplementary Tables," September 2016, on MDRC's website (www.mdrc.org).

10 Horn and Carroll (1996).

11 Scrivener et al. (2015).

12 These data cannot determine, therefore, whether students enrolled in a different college. Future reports will include data from the National Student Clearinghouse, which tracks enrollment and degree attainment from over 3,600 postsecondary institutions nationwide.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Bringing CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) to Ohio

Early Findings from a Demonstration in Three Community Colleges

By Colleen Sommo and Alyssa Ratledge

Nationally, community college graduation rates remain stubbornly low, despite strides made in access — and they are particularly so for low-income students, nontraditional students, and students who need to take developmental (remedial) courses. In 2014, three schools in Ohio — Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, and Lorain County Community College — set out to address their low-income students' needs thoughtfully and comprehensively, turning to a proven-effective program: CUNY ASAP, developed by the City University of New York. ASAP requires students to enroll full time and provides comprehensive financial, academic, and support services. This brief describes the ASAP demonstration in Ohio and the programs implemented by the three schools. Early findings from the random assignment evaluation show that the Ohio programs substantially increased full-time enrollment and credit accumulation during the first semester, as well as persistence and full-time enrollment in the second semester. The study will eventually report whether there are significant effects on degree attainment.