

# Capturing Involvement Data Online Makes Assessment Easier

The Office of Student Organizations and Leadership at California State University at Sacramento quantifies the link between student leadership and academic performance.

## Assessment Study Overview

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

California State University at Sacramento (“Sac State”) invests a great deal of money and resources in support of co-curricular activities in an effort to foster student engagement; therefore, it is necessary to assess if such an initiative actually enhances student success. The purpose of this study was to determine whether students who participated in co-curricular activities during their college career, in this case serving as club leaders, achieved higher academic performance than their uninvolved peers.

### ORGSYNC: INVOLVEMENT DATA COLLECTION MADE EASY

When Sac State performed its first assessment in 2009, the process of collecting student involvement data to send to the Office of Institutional Research (“OIR”) was time consuming and inefficient. It took five advisors two days to sort through archived paper records and find the names of students who were once leaders on campus.

For the 2011 assessment study, Sac State used easy-to-pull student involvement data collected in OrgSync. In minutes, the department ran a ‘User Report’, pulled student ID numbers and leadership information for each student, and sent the data off to the OIR for analysis. “With OrgSync, our office keeps much better records and it’s easier than ever to gather student involvement data. Before OrgSync, the thought of doing assessment on organizations was daunting because it was so difficult to get the data. Now, the data is accessible and conducting assessment is possible,” said Tom Carroll, Assistant Director of the Office of Student Organizations and Leadership.

## 2011 Assessment Study Results

### INVOLVEMENT INCREASES SUCCESS - QUANTIFIED

The results of the study confirmed and quantified the link between student involvement through organization leadership and academic performance. By tracking and pulling key cohort data from OrgSync, Sac State was able to pinpoint the posi-

tive effects of serving as a club leader for underrepresented minorities, transfer students, commuter students, and other non-traditional students on campus.

The OIR found that no matter what the starting point for students coming in was, student involvement had a positive impact on graduation and retention rates.

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- Tom Carroll

Assistant Director, Office of Student Organizations & Leadership

### JUSTIFICATION FOR FUNDING & RESOURCES

The 2009 and 2011 assessment studies supported Tom Carroll’s position that “Good assessment provides resources for student success.” By proving that students were learning and developing in their programs, the Office of Student Organizations and Leadership at Sac State has received the support and funding needed to help its programs flourish.

### THE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

The Office of Student Organizations and Leadership created the Leadership Initiative in 2009 to encourage leadership and involvement amongst non-traditional students. After experiencing success on a small scale, the office used the results from the studies during its budget review process to request additional funding and resources.

The results of the assessment quantified the benefits of leadership for non-traditional students and validated the need for leadership programs. As a result, the Leadership Initiative received additional funding, grew from less than one full-time staff member to six, and has seen its membership increase from 70 to 700 students in one academic year.

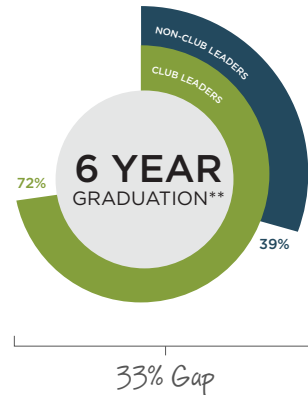
## FULL CIRCLE GRANT

In 2011, Sac State's Student Activities department was awarded the Full Circle Grant, a \$1.8 million federal grant to bolster recruitment, retention, and graduation rates among Asian American and Pacific Islander students.

The campus submitted data from its involvement assessment study, which quantified the success resulting from student involvement amongst non-traditional students. The study identified the key cohorts who typically struggle in college and showed that those students see more success as a result of being in a leadership role at Sac State.

## The Impact of Involvement

No matter what the starting point for students coming in, student involvement has a positive impact on graduation and retention rates.



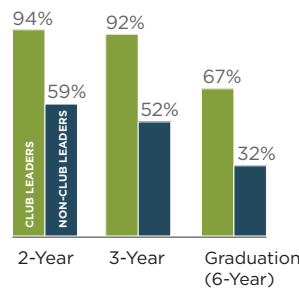
### All Students (Native Freshmen)

Club Leaders were 4x more likely to graduate within six years than Non-Club Leaders

## Next Steps for Sac State

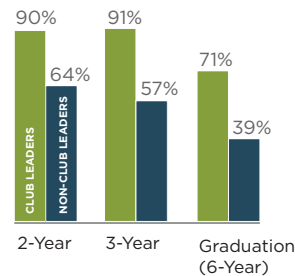
### EASE OF ASSESSMENT YIELDS VISION

With the task of collecting and sharing data no longer an obstacle, Sac State has a vision for expanding their data-driven knowledge base. Proposed future studies will focus on broadening the scope of the assessment to include all students, include other campus departments now using OrgSync, and measure learning outcomes for all campus programs.



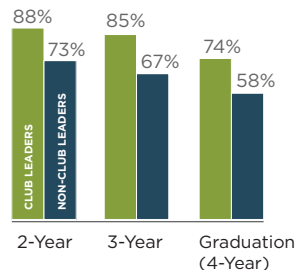
### Underrepresented Minorities (Native Freshmen)

There was a 35% performance gap between the graduation rate of Underrepresented Minority Club Leaders and Non-Club Leaders.



### Commuter Students (Native Freshmen)

Club leaders significantly outperformed other students across all metrics tested.



### Transfer Students

Club Leaders were 1.8x more likely to graduate within four years



### Tom Carroll

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The assessment reports produced by Sac State may be found by visiting the following links:

2009 - The Impact of Extracurricular Activity on Student Academic Performance: <http://goo.gl/YiOCf>

2011 - Student Leadership and Academic Performance -- A Study of Student Club Leaders: <http://goo.gl/ruao9>