Automatic Graduation
Institution: Tarrant County College

Problem/challenge: Prior to 2012, Tarrant County College (TCC) did not have systems in place to identify and automatically award Certificate and Associate Degree completers/graduates their earned educational credentials. TCC graduates were required to login to TCC's Student Portal and submit a petition to be granted their certificate or degree. This student initiated petition process was problematic because many students failed to realize they were eligible to graduate. The reduced number of completers became a bigger challenge when the State of Texas began to issue a percentage of TCC's funding based on the number of students who graduated from TCC.

Solution/intervention: In an effort to increase our graduate volume, TCC's Records Department collaborated with its IT department to create systems and processes that automatically identified certificate and associate degree graduates. The custom processes scan the Student database, identify students who have completed their designated certificate(s) and degree(s) and award the student their earned credential automatically. In addition, these custom processes identify students who are within 12 credit hours of completing their program and place these students on spreadsheets that are shared with campus Advising staff. The Advising staff reach out to these students, inform them how close they are to graduating and finalize a plan for the student to graduate. In addition to the system enhancements, a Graduation Outreach Specialist Position was created to oversee TCC's automatic graduation process. The results of TCC's automatic graduation process have been impressive. In the 2 year period from 2013 to 2015, TCC has increased its student credentials earned from 5,593 graduates in 2013 to 7,215 graduates in 2015. TCC's graduates have grown by 29% in 2 years!

Key words: automatic graduation, completion success, student success

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