



Inside IR

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Persistence is defined as a student enrolling in consecutive terms. For example, a student who enrolled in fall 2017 and spring 2018 is said to have persisted to the next term. This definition is also applicable to spring students who are enrolled the next fall.

So, What is Civitas?

MCC has partnered with Civitas to create a better understanding of our student population and what impacts students' persistence.

One of the topics of discussion at MCC is, What is Civitas and why did the College purchase the software? Several concerns have been raised including the cost, what it does, and how the College is using the results. This article will focus on why Civitas is at MCC and what we have learned from it thus far.

Civitas is a suite of tools, not a single product. The suite includes: Illume Student, Illume Impact, Illume Courses, and College Scheduler. Each of these tools looks at student persistence in a unique way.

Illume Student is a platform that allows the user to see the predicted persistence score for a group of students, and identify the powerful predictors for that group. "Powerful predictors" are variables that have been shown to have the most impact on student persistence. Examples include: the number of days a student registered for class before the beginning of the term, student's cumulative GPA, student's GPA from the previous term, the ratio of earned to attempted credits, and Blackboard.

Illume Student looks at well over 150 powerful predictors and, as the group of students being looked at changes, so too do the powerful predictors.

Using this tool, the user can create custom student lists and then send out nudge emails, that is, emails intended to motivate the student into a specific action. It is true that this work can be completed without Civitas, but an analysis that would take days for the IR Office to complete takes only minutes using Illume Student.

Illume Courses is a tool that looks at persistence and graduation rates by course. It then codes courses into categories such as: "Challenge," "Yellow Flag," and "Late Hurdles."

Challenge courses are those that have a higher D/F/W rate than the average rate.

Yellow Flag courses are those in which a student's receiving a grade of C puts him/her at risk for not graduating.

Late Hurdle courses are those that occur late in a student's college career (for example, capstone courses). Passing them is associated with higher graduation rates.

Identifying courses that have unique characteristics helps the College focus resources and support to the areas in the most need.

College Scheduler is a tool to help students create a course schedule that fits their lifestyle. The intent of this

(Continued on p. 2)

So, What is Civitas? *(continued)*

***Illume Student** allows the user to see the predicted persistence score for a group of students, and identify the powerful predictors for that group.*

product is to allow students to input times and days they are not available, and build a schedule around them.

The tool also tracks common times students are not available, and general course demand. These are then used to help inform the Master Schedule as to what courses to offer and when.

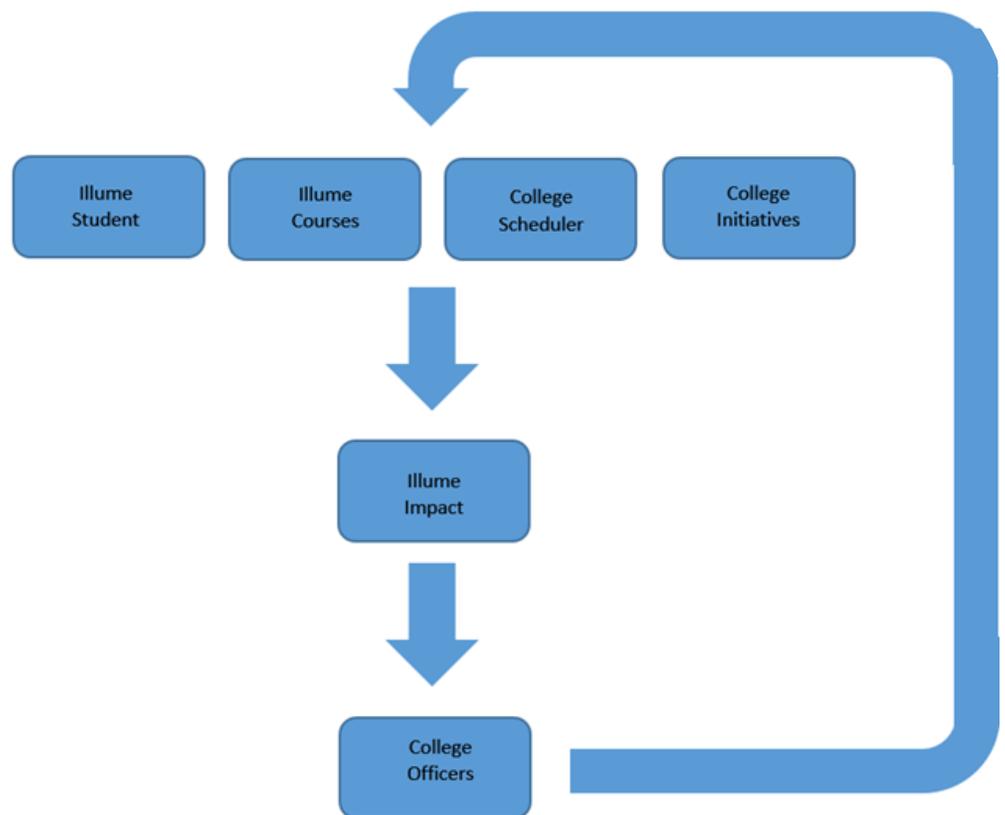
Illume Impact allows the College to measure the impact of various initiatives on student persistence, controlling for extraneous variables. The goal is to com-

pare a student who participated in the initiative to someone who could have participated but didn't. Students are matched on a number of characteristics, and the results of the impact analysis can be attributed to the initiative itself.

Altogether, the Civitas suite of tools are giving MCC new insights into our students and helping to inform College initiatives in order to increase student success.

***Illume Courses** is a tool that looks at persistence and graduation rates by course.*

Figure 1. Civitas Work Flow



***College Scheduler** is a tool to help students create a course schedule that fits their lifestyle. It also helps inform the Master Schedule as to what courses to offer and when.*

***Illume Impact** allows the College to measure the impact of various initiatives on student persistence, controlling for extraneous variables.*

Using Civitas to Predict the CAR’s Impact on Persistence

For a recent study, the IR Office utilized Civitas to determine whether a tutoring program at the Center for Academic Reading (“CAR”) impacted persistence.

As shown in Figure 2, the program accounted for a 5.9% overall lift in persistence for students served from spring 2014 to spring 2017 (aggregated). Nationally, a 2.9% lift in persistence means that an initiative was successful.

Therefore, the CAR initiative was considered a success.

The CAR’s tutoring program was especially beneficial for new students (7.6% lift), part-time students (12.8% lift), and students at high attrition risk (5.5% to 8.3% lift). In fact, the higher the risk, the larger the impact there was on persistence.

For this study, we utilized prediction-based propensity score matching to minimize self-selection bias.

Figure 2. Impact of the CAR’s Tutoring Program on Persistence



The overall lift of the program is shown in the first row. The lift on new students is shown in the second row.

Enrollment Trends at MCC

MCC’s Office of Institutional Research is the official source for enrollment information. One of our duties is to monitor enrollment trends at the College.

Over the past five years, MCC has seen a decrease in enrollment of 3,062 or 20%, as shown in Table 1.

During this same time period, as shown

in Table 2 (p. 4), the College has seen a decrease in most student types. These should be expected.

The majority of MCC students reside in Monroe County, a county that has been shrinking in size and high school population. This decrease in high school students (shown in Table 3, p. 4) has affected enrollment at MCC along with the in-

The Institutional Research Office is the official source for enrollment information

Table 1. Trends in Fall Census Headcount

	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	5-Year Change
Fall Census Headcount	15,335	14,586	13,587	12,907	12,273	-3,062

Enrollment Trends at MCC *(continued)*

creased competition from competitor schools. The increase in competition is partly seen in the yield in high school

students from school districts around MCC.

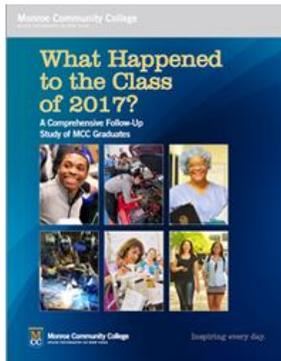
Table 2. Trends in Student Type

	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Change
First-Time	3,543	3,378	3,172	2,938	2,878	-665
Transfer	1,399	1,425	1,322	1,218	1,192	-207
Re-Admit	2,130	2,253	2,006	1,865	1,839	-291
Continuing	8,073	7,392	6,995	6,753	6,226	-1,847
Other	189	138	92	133	138	-51

Table 3. Trends in High School Yield

	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Change
Monroe County Public Schools	22.0%	22.5%	21.7%	20.3%	-1.7%
City of Rochester High Schools	31.3%	29.2%	27.6%	23.6%	-7.7%

The population of high school students in Monroe County – and the population of the county itself – is shrinking



“What Happened to the Class of 2017?”

The “What Happened to the Class of 2017?” book and brochure have been posted on the [IR website](#). Hard copies have been distributed on- and off-campus (e.g., to local college presidents, high school counselors).

During the 2016-17 academic year, MCC awarded 1,950 associate degrees and 265 certificates. The Institutional Research Office was able to collect outcome data on 67% of graduates.

Some of the report highlights include:

- 60% of graduates are employed and/or continuing their education.
- Local employers continue to hire the majority of our graduates who enter the workforce. Of the career and certificate program graduates who secured full-time employment, 91% are employed in Monroe or an adjacent county.
- 70 percent of the graduates who transferred are attending SUNY or CUNY institutions.

For more information about the Institutional Research (IR) Office, you can visit [our pages](#) on the MCC website or contact an IR staff member:

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Previous issues of *Inside IR* are available on our homepage:
<http://www.monroecc.edu/depts/research/>

