Discussion Starters about Metro and Cost in the Community Colleges

"Metro's experience shows that by spending a little more on the front end, we can see big cost reductions on the back end."
- Ken O'Donnell, CSU Chancellor's Office, former senior director of student engagement

The data below are intended as discussion starters on big picture issues about Metro's cost and cost reductions per completer. Metro sharply reduces attrition, time to graduation, and extra units that do not count toward the degree. Once these hidden costs are factored in, it becomes clear that Metro is substantially less expensive than current practice. Some of these data should be interpreted with caution because they do not use a matched comparison. The cost study from 2013 will be updated in 2018-19.

Cost Study

Cost per completer at City College:

Comparison group
$18,500 $40,159

Metro Academies
$18,500 $15,961   cost reduction of $22,714
$1,484

- Spending in years 1 & 2
- Extra cost of Metro in years 1 & 2
- Spending in years 3 on to graduation

Source: A Cost Efficiency Study conducted in partnership with the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges and the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement.

Fewer Units on Transfer

70   78   extra units

- Maximum number of transferrable units accepted by SF State - 70
- Median units accumulated by Metro transfer students - 71, or one extra unit
- Median units accumulated by California community college transfer students - 78, or 8 extra units

2.5 yrs.

4.3 yrs.

- Metro
- Latino/a and African American associate's graduates state wide

Faster Time to Associate's Degree

Almost all Metro students place from one to three English and/or math levels below transfer. Despite this disadvantage at the starting line, Metro students' median time to associate's degree is 2.5 years. Compare this to the median time to degree for the Latino and African American students among the 64,000 California community college students who earned an associate degree: 4.3 years. The median time to degree for all 64,000 students who earned an associate's degree was 4.1 years.

Source on statewide extra units and median time to degree: Campaign for College Opportunity, Real Cost of College, 2014.