

Meeting Expectations and Serving Needs to Prepare Students for Dynamic Futures
2008 Institutional Academic Outcomes Report
Iowa Lakes Community College

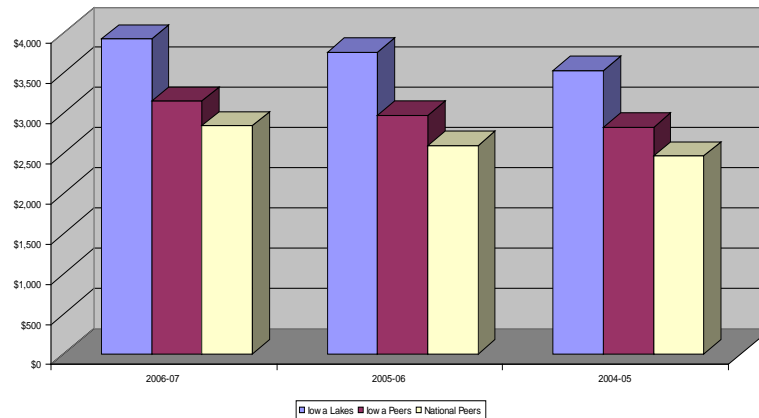
Documenting *what we do* and *how well we do it* are among the current expectations of federal and state legislators, departments of education, and our publics. Along with expectations focused on “outcomes” and “high performance” is the expectation for “*transparency in disclosure.*” *Transparency* in reporting our collegewide goals and our student outcomes is a **commitment** we assumed when we became an AQIP college.

Knowing how well our outcomes compare to our peers helps us strengthen our competitive marketing position. The traditional student enrollment pool in our area and across the nation is shrinking. When we know how our programs and student outcomes compare to our peers, we can [1] market our strengths to attract more students, and [2] focus our revenue and personnel resources on strengthening those areas that we don't compare as well – or we have determined are collegewide or discipline/program priorities.

Understanding what potential students **expect** and how our strengths compare to peers in terms of students priorities provides valuable insights for strategic planning, budgeting and prioritizing.

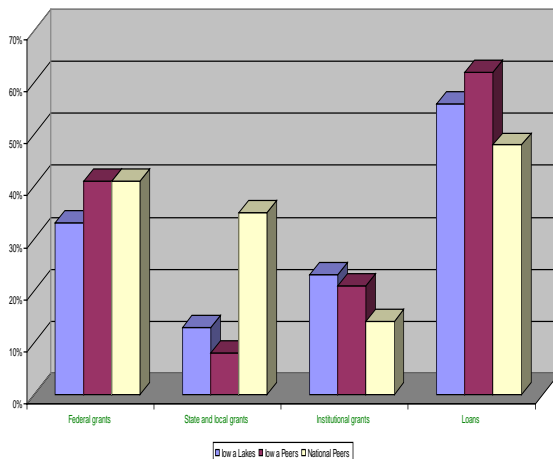
Access and Affordability are standards by which students, parents and legislators now measure the effectiveness of the “open-door” mission of community colleges. A review of Iowa Lakes’ tuition and required fees in comparison to the mean for other Iowa community colleges, as well as a national peer group of small, rural two-year colleges, reveals that attendance at Iowa Lakes is somewhat higher than our peers.

Tuition and Required Fees for Full-time, First-time Degree-seeking Students

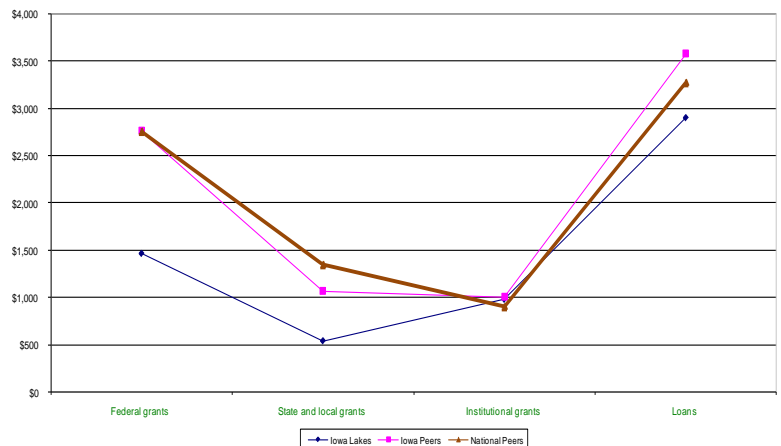


According to UCLA's fall 2007 Student Survey of Freshman, 37 percent said the financial aid offer was the key to their college decision.

Percent of Full-time First-time Degree-Seeking Student Receiving Financial Aid 2005 - 2006, By Type

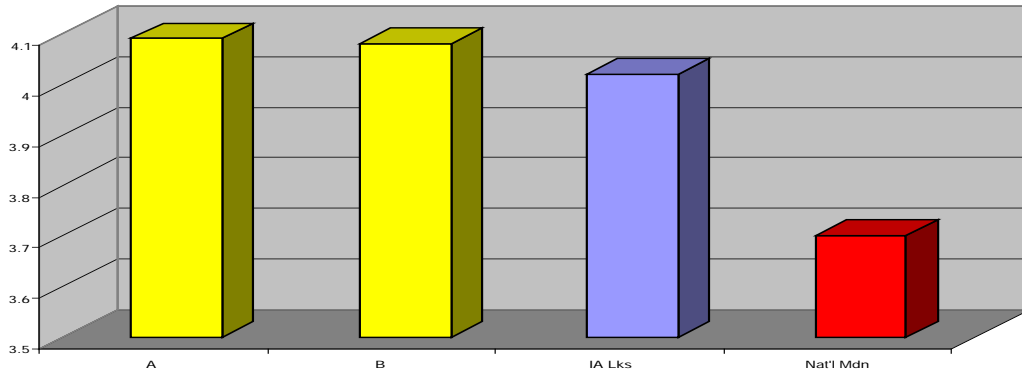


Average Financial Aid Received by Full-Time, First-Time Degree-Seeking Students 2005-2006, By Type



Quality has been among the top 5 concerns, nationally, for new college freshman for more than a decade. This year's freshmen were "more concerned about academic quality and affordability than they have been in decades" (UCLA 2007).

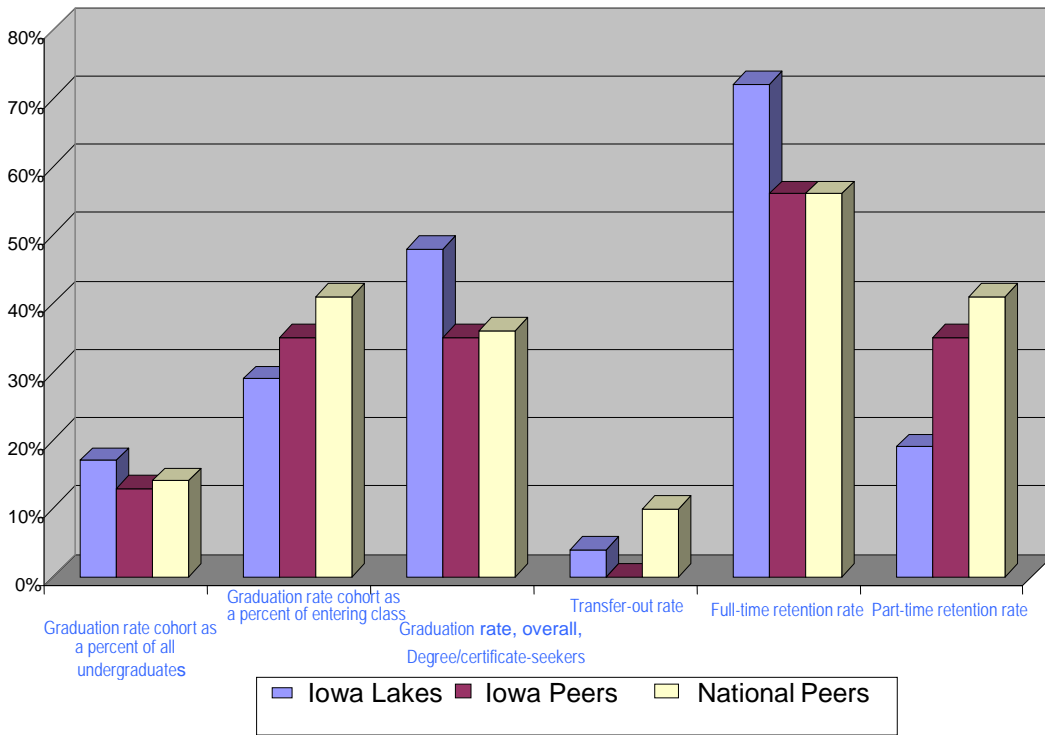
ACT SOS Impression of Quality Rating



Source: 2007 National Community College Benchmarking Project, Johnson County Community College, KS. "A" and "B" in chart above refer to unidentified Iowa community college peers completing NCCBP 2007.

For more than a decade Iowa Lakes Community College has tracked students' general education proficiency outcomes, CTE program competency attainment, and educational outcomes. Looking across credentials and programs, Iowa Lakes' retention and graduation rates are positive when compared with national and Iowa community college peers.

**Student Outcomes for Fall 2006 (all) Students;
2003 Freshman Cohort Graduation Rate**



Source: IPEDS Peer Analysis System, 2008.

Career and Technical programs at Iowa Lakes enjoy strong performance in graduate skill attainment, graduation, transfer and placement.

CTE Programs: Perkins Performance Indicator Outcomes, FY02 – FY07

Fiscal Year	1P1 Technical Skill Attainment	2P1 Credential Attainment	3P1 Student Retention/ Transfer	4P1 Student Placement	5P1 Nontrad Participation	5P2 Nontrad Completion
FY02	95.01%	NA	NA	40.50%	42.40%	36.40%
FY03	91.90%	NA	NA	23.50%	36.10%	38.90%
FY04	86.10%	NA	NA	8.30%	42.90%	39.40%
FY05	95.53%	NA	NA	64.56%	30.12%	28.24%
FY06	95.29%	NA	NA	68.24%	20.42%	7.63%
FY07	95.24%	50.46%	76.56%	70.82%	13.00%	41.30%
IA Lks Mean	93.18%	50.46%	76.56%	45.99%	30.82%	31.98%
FY09 State Target	82.06%	44.02%	71.79%	71.78%	21.76%	39.76%

Source: Iowa Department of Education, Division of Community Colleges & Workforce Preparation (2008).

In fall 1998, Iowa Lakes' Arts and Sciences faculty chose ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) to measure sophomore achievement of faculty-identified common learning objectives. CAAP also provides an opportunity to compare Iowa Lakes sophomore proficiency with peer colleges, in compliance with Higher Learning Commission and AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program) expectations to:

- a. Identify common student learning objectives,
- b. Monitor the currency and effectiveness of the curricula,
- c. Regularly collect and analyze agreed upon measures of student performance, and
- d. Compare results of student performance with other higher education institutions.

The CAAP is administered each spring. Sophomores pursuing an A.A. (1999 – 2008), A.S. (2002 – 2008) degree, and selected AAS program (2008) majors who have earned 45 credits at the end of the previous fall term – or will earn 60+ credits by the end of the spring term – are invited to participate. AAS sophomores enrolled in programs with strong concentration of mathematics, science and/or English coursework are also invited to participate. At this time, student participation is voluntary.

Student commitment to test results is strong.

Level of Participant Effort on CAAP Tests

Test Subject	Tried Best	Moderate Effort	Combined Levels
Writing	83.5%	16.5%	100.0%
Math	62.9%	22.7%	85.6%
Reading	65.5%	23.8%	89.3%
Critical Thinking	67.7%	27.3%	95.0%
Science	56.2%	27.4%	83.6%

Comparing cohort mean scores with those of other college freshman is one measure of assessing curriculum and institutional effectiveness. [The U.S. Congress is currently considering adding a provision to the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that requires colleges to annually report specific student outcome measures as a condition of continued accreditation.](#) This bill is scheduled to be voted on by the full Congress in fall 2008.

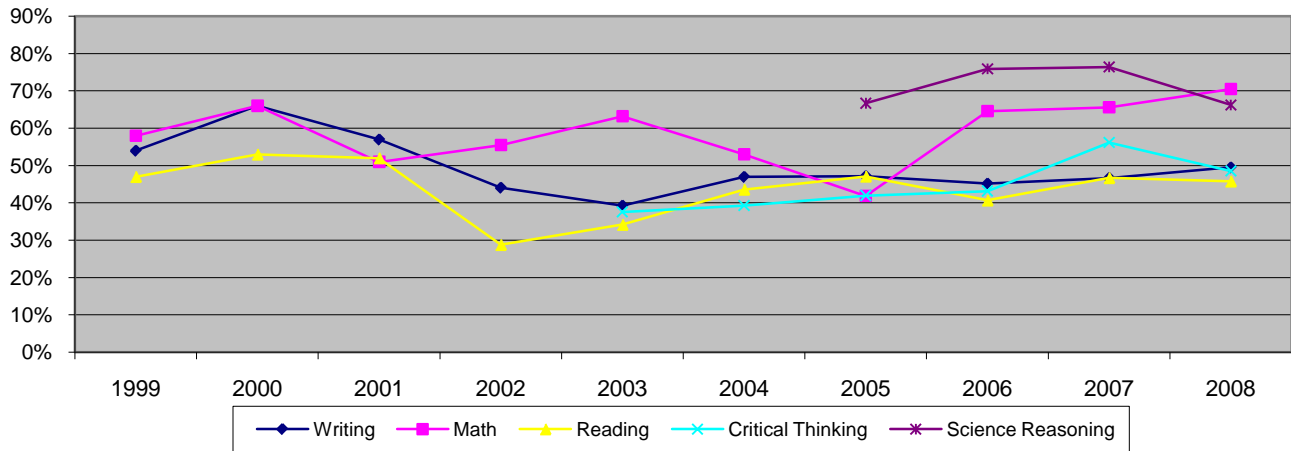
CAAP scores are one measure used by Iowa Lakes Community College to document for accreditation the specific learning outcomes required for awarding degrees and credentials. It also fulfills the requirement that we compare our learning outcomes with those of other higher education institutions.

Iowa Lakes 2008 CAAP cohort test scores are comparable to mean CAAP scores of sophomores nationwide, regardless of whether students attend a two-year or four-year college, or level of home college admission-selectivity criteria.

Cohort	Writing Composite	Usage/Mechanics	Rhetoric	Math Composite	Basic Algebra	College Algebra	Reading Composite	Arts/Literature Reading	Social Science/ Science Reading	Critical Thinking	Science Reasoning
2 Yr + 4 Yr Sophomores	63.2	16.6	16.7	57.1	14.8	14.6	61.4	15.2	15.9	61.5	60.4
2 Yr Public Colleges	62.1	16.1	16.1	56.2	14.2	14	60.5	14.9	15.4	60.9	59.2
Iowa Lakes. 2008	62.6	16.4	16.4	56.8	14.5	14.4	60.7	14.6	16	61	60.4

Large numbers of Iowa Lakes sophomores continue to achieve national proficiency in one (85.1%) or more subject area. As a cohort, the percent of students achieving national proficiency increased on the college math (70.5% – 2008; 65.6% - 2007) and writing (49.5% - 2008; 46.7% - 2007) tests and remained stable for reading (45.8%. A slight decrease was seen in critical thinking (48.6%) and science reasoning (66.3%)] scores for the cohort.

Percent Achieving National Proficiency by Test and CAAP Cohort



Students enter Iowa Lakes with diverse levels of academic preparation, education goals and family commitments. CAAP does not measure impact of these variables on the college experience; however, it may provide insight to the “value added” academic preparation at Iowa Lakes Community College.

2008 CAAP Cohort Demographics

Cohort	#	Age	Cum GPA	% ACT	ACT Comp
AA	58	21.7	3.22	71%	20.17
AS	41	24.17	3.02	49%	18.15
AAS	8	30.13	3.12	100%	22.50
Total	107	23.26	3.14	65%	20.32

Beginning spring 2008, Associate Degree Nursing students were invited to complete the CAAP. This group is somewhat older than other CAAP completers, but ACT scores demonstrate strong academic preparation.

2008 CAAP National Proficiency by Degree Cohort

Cohort	Writing	College Math	Reading	Critical Thinking	Science Reasoning
AA	51.70%	82.46%	50.00%	56.89%	65.22%
AS	39.02%	55.00%	41.46%	38.46%	67.74%
AAS	87.50%	62.50%	37.50%	37.50%	67.67%
Total	49.53%	70.48%	45.79%	48.57%	66.25%

A growing number of four-year colleges require CAAP completion to attain “junior” status or as a graduation requirement. Achievement of CAAP “national proficiency” provide graduates with documentation of basic skills employers, nationwide, value in new hires.

How Can We Use CAAP Outcomes for Continuous Quality Improvement of General Education at Iowa Lakes?

Individual CAAP test results – and the change in levels of proficiency from entrance assessment to CAAP – can provide important data to support decision-making and evaluate how fully we are achieving our discipline mission statements. As part of the Iowa Lakes Arts and Science mission statement, faculty identified commonly agreed upon learning outcomes *“to ensure that Arts and Science students receive general education coursework that will enrich their lives and enable them to be successful lifelong learners.”* Each discipline, in turn, has established discipline-specific mission and learner outcome statements. This is consistent with AQIP expectations. Related *Systems Portfolio* questions Iowa Lakes must answer for the 2008 report include –

- *By what means do you ensure your student learning expectations, practices and development objectives align with your mission, vision and philosophy?*
- *How do you improve your current processes and systems for helping students learn and develop?*
- *With regard to your current results for student learning and development, how do you set targets for improvement? What specific improvement priorities are you targeting and how will these be addressed? How do you communicate your current results and improvement priorities to students, faculty, staff, administrators and appropriate stakeholders?*

Iowa Lakes Arts and Science Student Outcome Goals

1. *Students are able to successfully complete general education and/or pre-professional coursework necessary for the first two years of college.*
2. *Students are able to successfully transfer to senior institutions.*
3. *Students with diverse backgrounds and abilities are able to access a full range of courses for personal enrichment, career exploration, lifelong learning skills, educational enhancement, and exploration of new information technologies.*
4. *Students are able to explore a multiplicity of avenues in the sciences, humanities, and the arts that enhance [a] appreciation and use of language; [b] ability to think and reason clearly, independently, critically and creatively; [c] understanding of the human experience and the context in which it occurs.*
5. *Students are able to explore a multiplicity of educational avenues that lead to global awareness, and appreciation of diversity in lifestyle and recognition of citizen rights and responsibilities in local, national and world communities.*

Annual CAAP testing also provides one means for Iowa Lakes to respond to some *AQIP Systems Portfolio* questions:

- *How do you determine the preparation required of students for the specific curricula, programs, courses, and learning they will pursue? What are the results?*
- *How do you discover how well prepared students completing programs, degrees and certificates are for further education or employment?*
- *What are your results for common student learning objectives as well as specific program learning objectives?*
- *What is your evidence that students have acquired the knowledge and skills base required by the institution and its stakeholders (i.e. other educational institutions and employers) for the awarding of specific degrees or credentials?*
- *How do your results compare with the results of other higher education institutions and, if appropriate, organizations outside of the education community?*

Since initiating CAAP testing, the Assessment Review Committee and individual disciplines have reviewed CAAP outcomes in terms of academic growth between entrance testing “levels of proficiency” and CAAP levels. ACT defines “expected growth in proficiency” as achieving the same “level of proficiency” or +/- one level of proficiency from ACT levels to CAAP. Following is an overview and comparison of growth in academic proficiency for the three tests which are tracked as part of our student information system (English/writing, reading, and mathematics).

Writing Levels of Proficiency

English/Communications Discipline Mission Statement

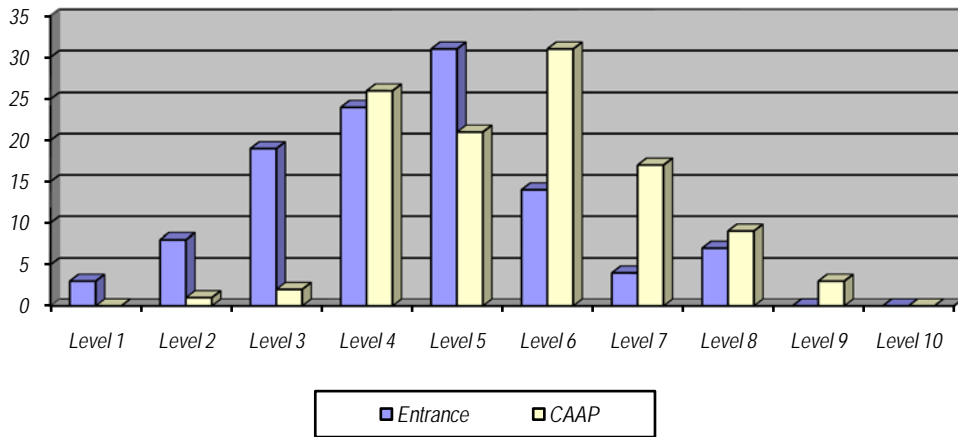
1. *Students are able to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through writing.*
2. *Students are able to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through listening and speaking.*
3. *Students are able to demonstrate the ability to read, write, listen, and think critically and creatively.*
4. *Students are able to demonstrate global awareness and an appreciation of diversity.*

Viewing proficiency growth in terms of cohort mean provides a panoramic snapshot of classroom impact on student academic achievement. Mean scores indicate students' skills progressed at a slightly better than expected rate for writing.

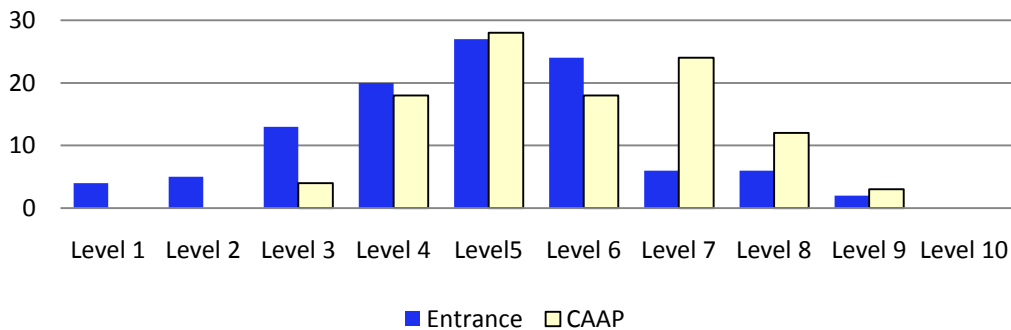
Cohort Writing	2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP
A.A.	5.1	6.0	4.2	5.7	4.6	6.1	5.3	6.1
A.S.	4.2	5.4	3.4	5.3	3.6	5.3	4.4	5.4
A.A.S.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5.8	7.0
All CAAP	4.5	5.7	3.8	5.5	4.1	5.7	4.9	5.8

By viewing patterns of growth based on the number of students scoring at each level for entrance and exit exams provides a closer look at curriculum impact. Looking at multiple years gives a broader perspective of trends.

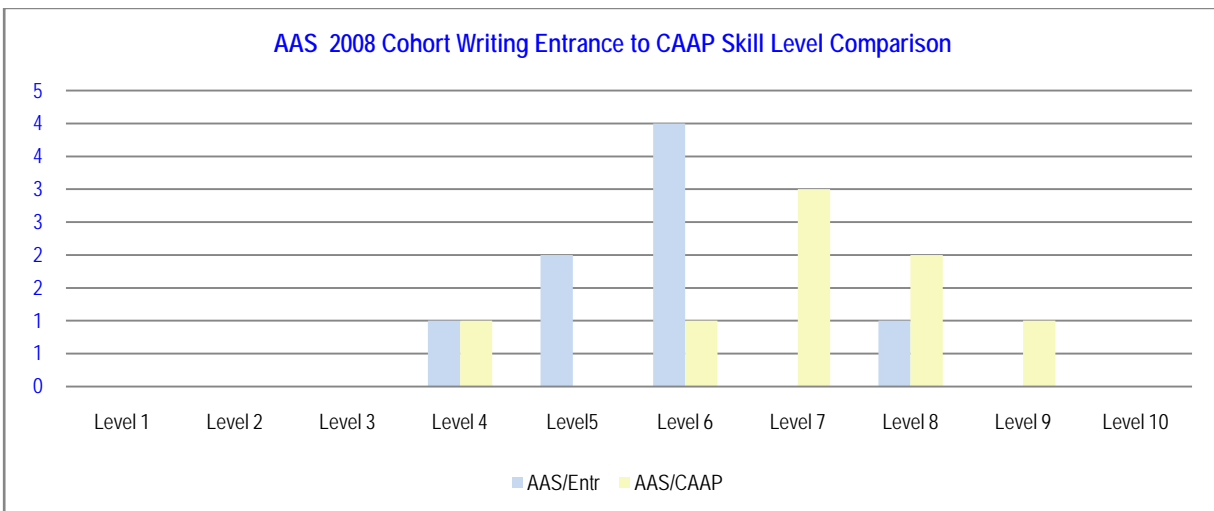
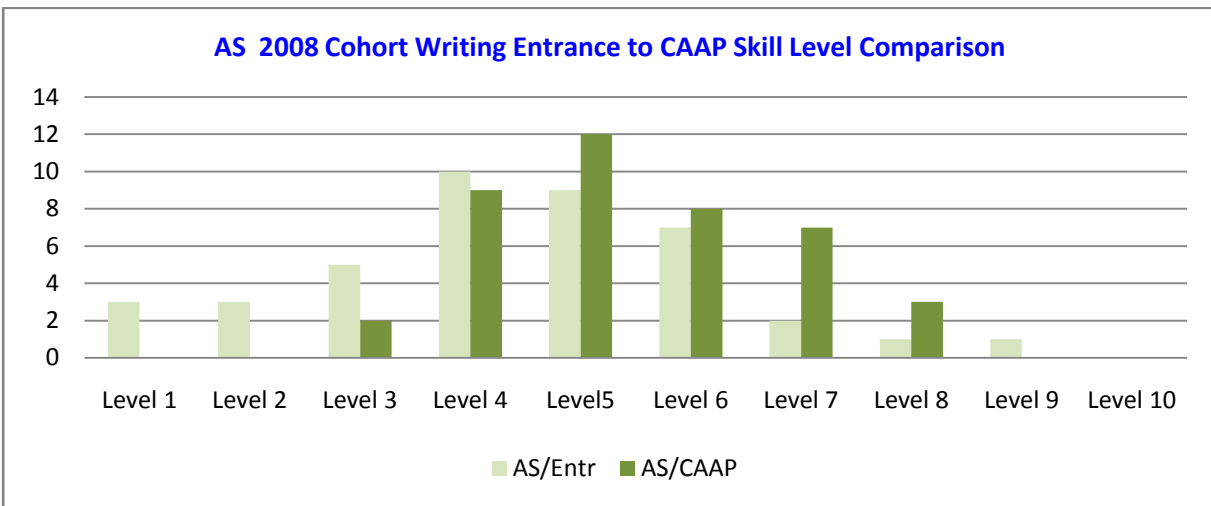
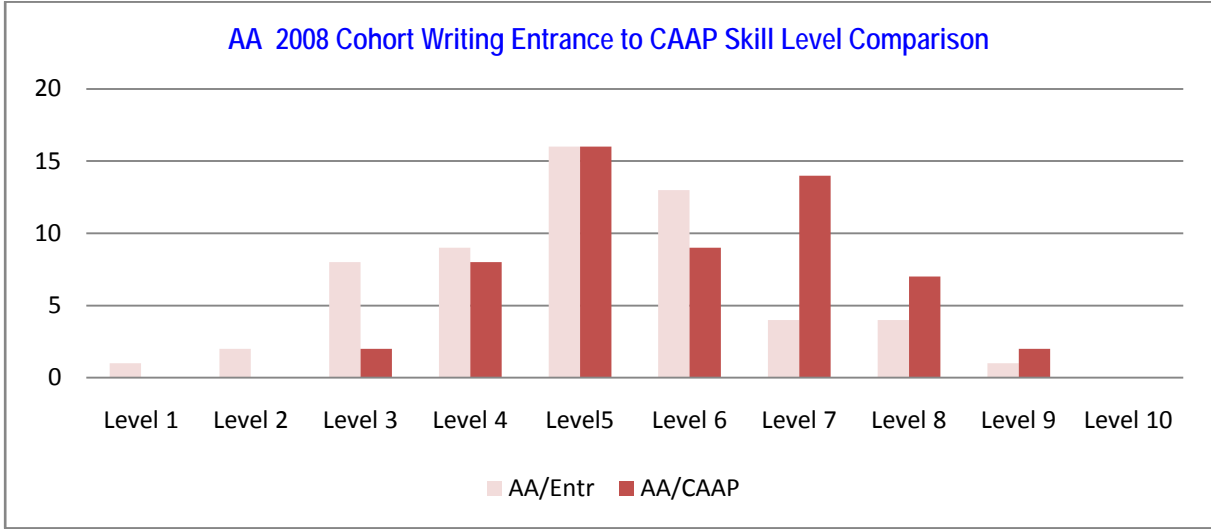
Writing Level Proficiency: Entrance Assessment to 2007 CAAP



Writing: Entrance to CAAP 2008 Skill Level Linkage



Each degree has general education outcomes specific to the career or education pathway. Looking at subject area skill within each credential provides perspective as to impact of course requirements on degree/career pathway preparation.



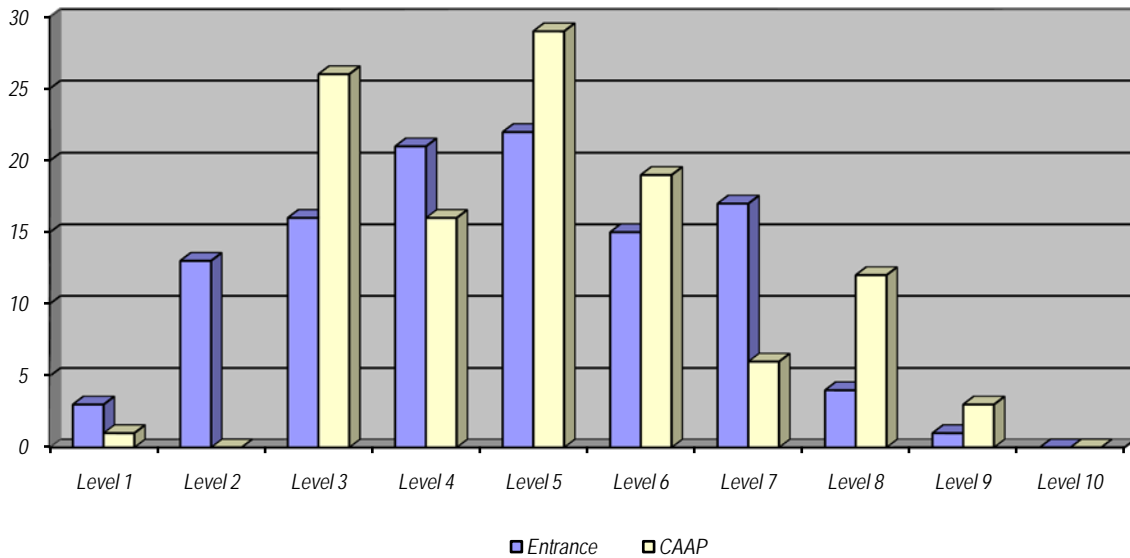
Reading Levels of Proficiency

[Reading proficiency](#) is essential for success in courses across the curricula. A snapshot view of CAAP cohort mean entrance and exit scores for reading indicate skill growth is as expected after the first two years of college.

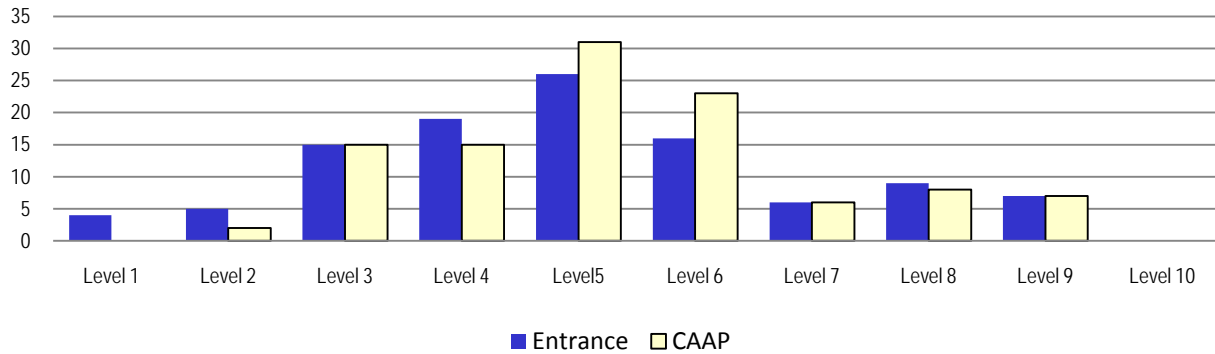
Cohort Reading	2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP
A.A.	5.1	5.6	5.1	5.1	4.7	5.4	5.0	5.5
A.S.	4.3	4.8	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.9	4.3	4.9
A.A.S.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5.8	6.1
All CAAP	4.6	5.2	4.8	4.8	4.4	5.2	4.8	5.3

AQIP asks us to reflect whether *levels of proficiency are compatible with commonly held learner outcome goals* and if *our processes best serve student needs*. AQIP then challenges us to determine "What" *specific improvement priorities should be targeted and how will these be addressed?*

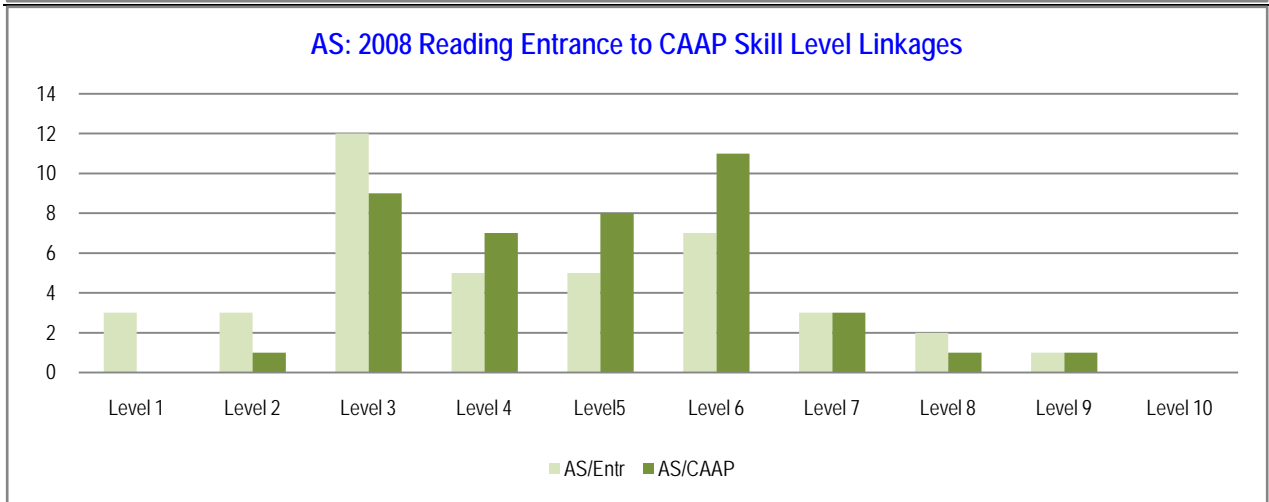
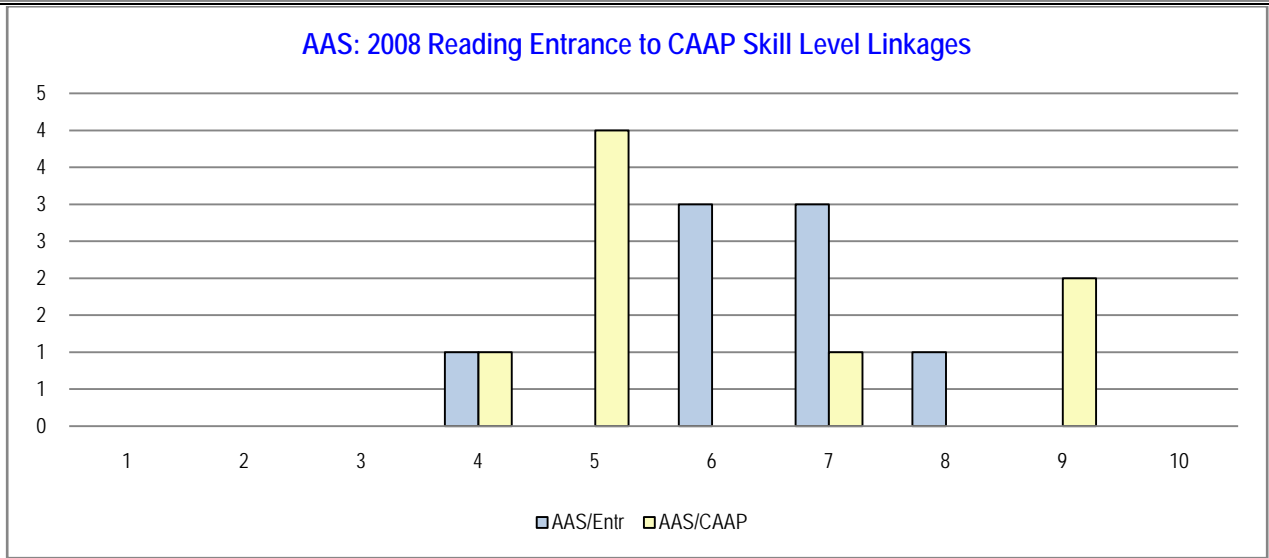
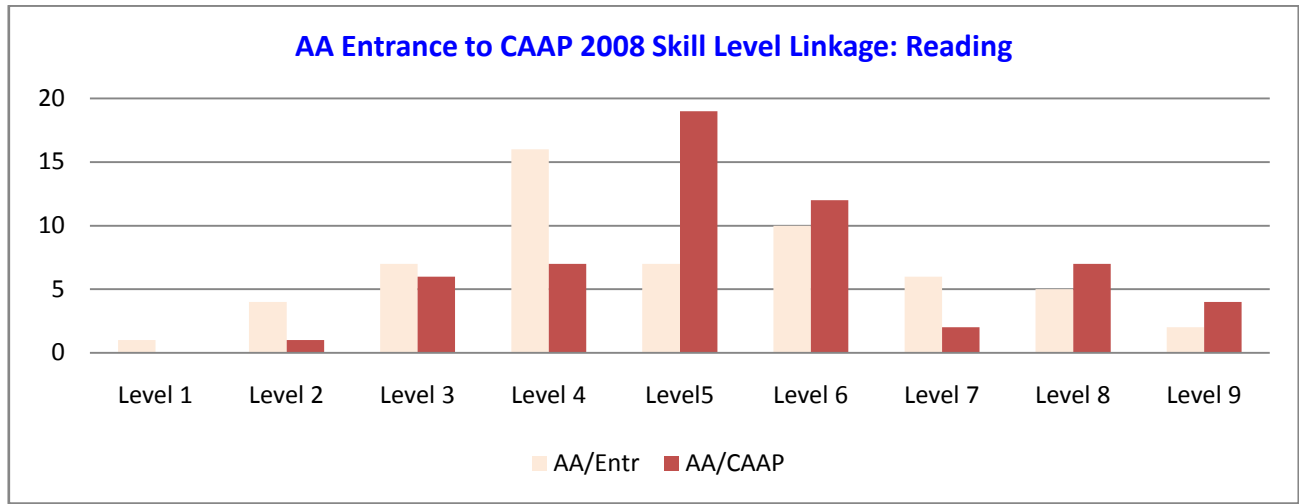
Reading Level Proficiency: Entrance Assessment to 2007 CAAP



Reading: Entrance to CAAP 2008 Skill Level Linkage



Looking at subject area skill within each credential provides perspective as to impact of course requirements on degree/career pathway preparation.



Math Proficiency Levels

Mathematics Discipline Mission Statement

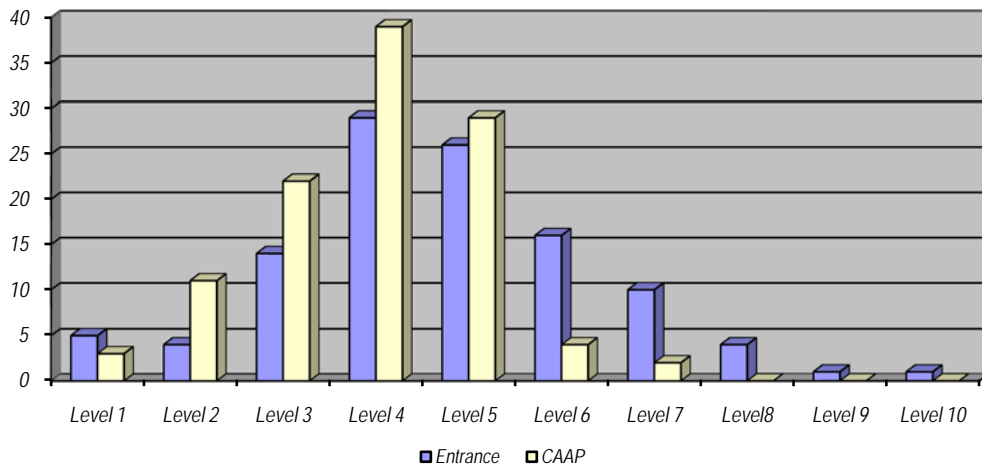
1. *Students will have the ability to use numerical reasoning skills.*
2. *Students will have the ability to apply problem-solving and logic skills.*
3. *Students will have the ability to apply appropriate technology in the solution of mathematical problems.*
4. *Students will gain knowledge of the historical aspects and an appreciation of mathematics.*

The level of mathematics proficiency is at the forefront of the current national debate regarding the nation's ability to compete in the global economy.

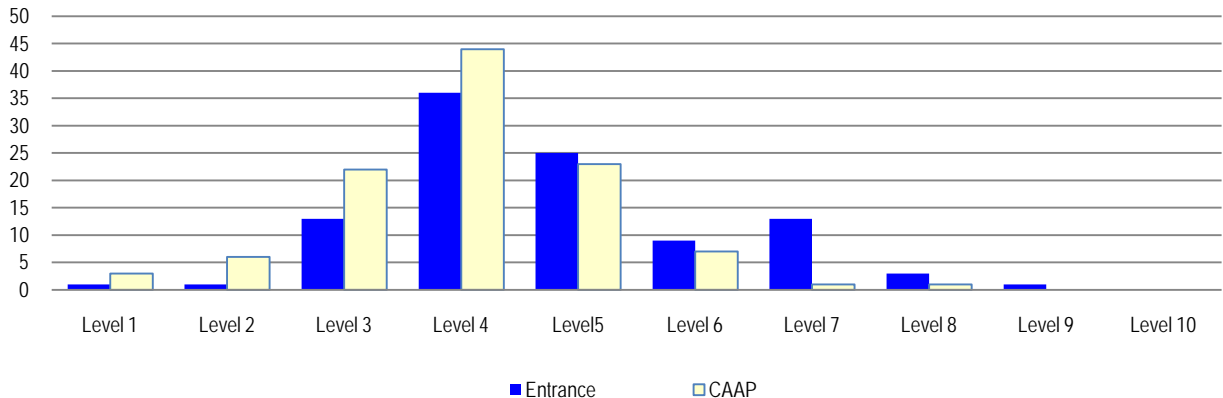
Cohort Mathematics	2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP	Entrance	CAAP
A.A.	4.5	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.7	4.0	4.6	4.3
A.S.	4.0	3.5	3.7	3.6	4.1	3.7	1.9	3.7
A.A.S.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.0	3.6
All CAAP	4.2	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.3	3.9	4.8	4.0

Comparing the entrance and exit levels of proficiency provides an illustration of academic growth in the math discipline.

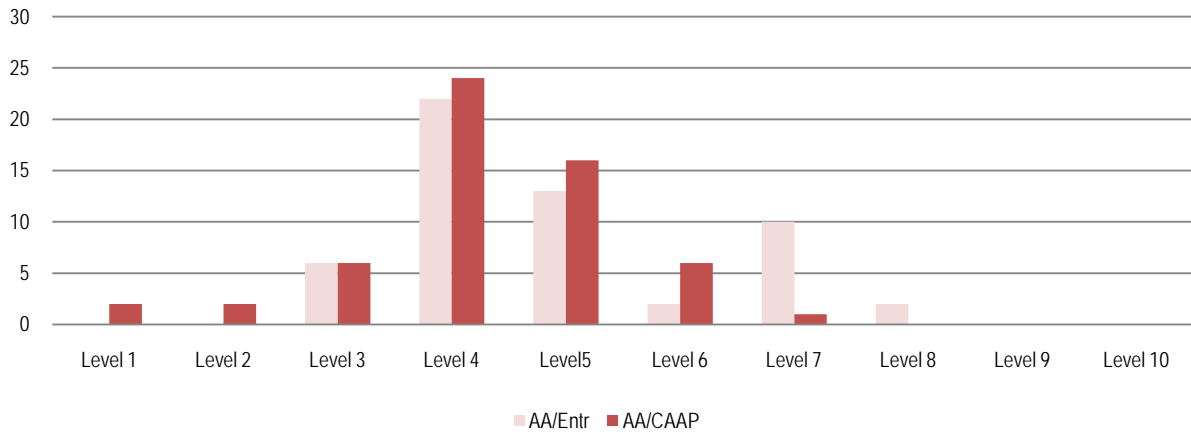
Mathematics Level Proficiency: Entrance Assessment to 2007 CAAP



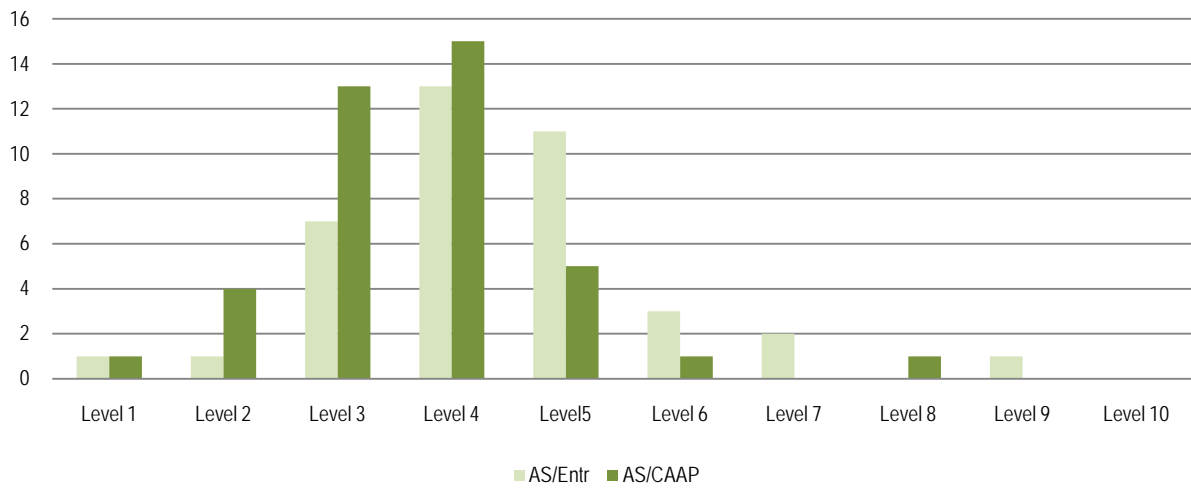
Mathematics: Entrance to CAAP 2008 Skill Level Linkage



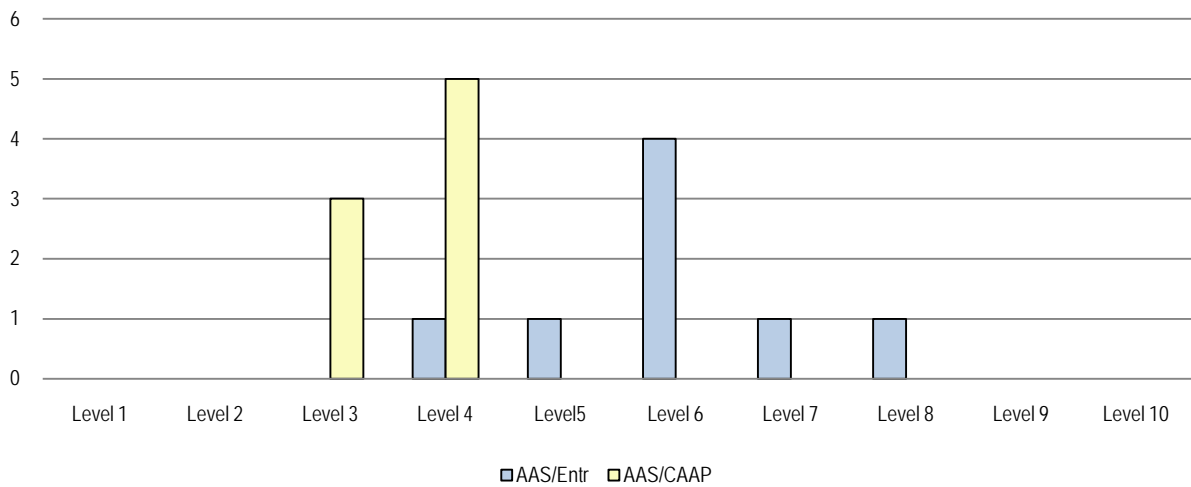
AA: 2008 Math Entrance to CAAP Skill Level Linkages



AS: 2008 Math Entrance to CAAP Skill Level Linkages



AAS: 2008 Math Entrance to CAAP Skill Level Linkages



CAAP Science Reasoning Proficiency Levels

Science Mission Statement and Outcome Goals

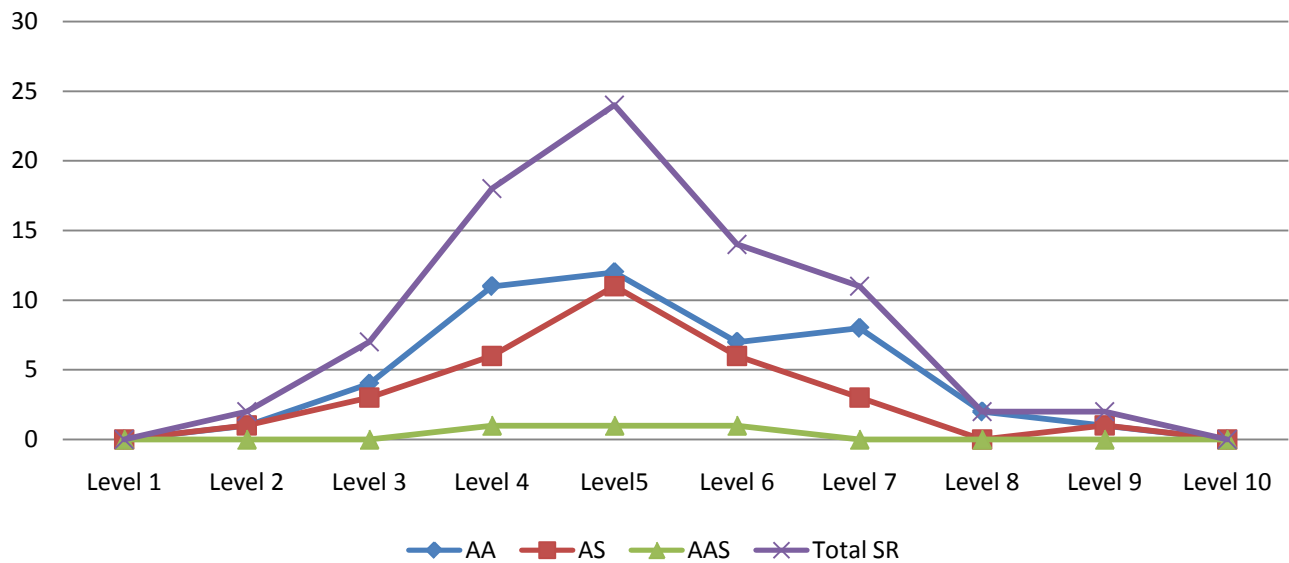
To assure the Iowa Lakes Arts and Science students can demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the natural world and the nature of scientific inquiry that will serve them well in their life and future education.

1. Students are able to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of physical and biological sciences.
2. Students are able to demonstrate an understanding of scientific method.
3. Students are able to gather, analyze, and use information in a structured way.

Completion of the CAAP Science Reasoning test is optional for students. It was added to the CAAP testing process in 2005 at students' request. Of the 107 students completing the 2008 CAAP, 80 (75%) chose to complete the Science Reasoning proficiency assessment. Two in every three (66.2%) students completing this assessment scored at the national proficiency level for college sophomores. A profile of Science Reasoning test takers reveal

- 58% were female;
- Average age was 23.2 years
- Average Cumulative GPA was 3.207
- 46 AA degree-seekers; 34 A.S. and 3 A.A.S. degree-seekers
- 58 students had an ACT Science (entrance) score on record in Datatel for value-added linkage purposes
- Mean ACT level for CAAP.

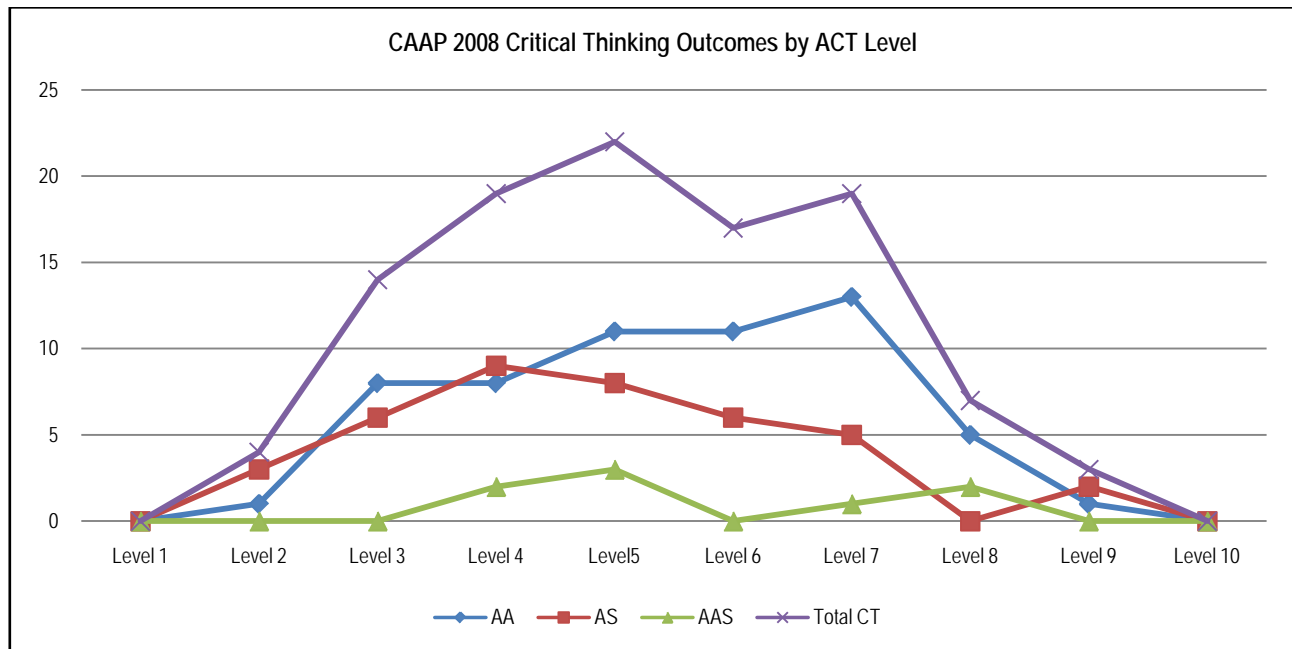
CAAP 2008 Science Reasoning Outcomes by ACT Level



CAAP Critical Thinking Proficiency Level

Iowa Lakes Community College currently has no entrance assessment of student critical thinking proficiency; therefore, value-added skills linkage is not available.

All disciplines and CTE programs have included demonstration of critical thinking and problem solving in expected student outcomes. Completion of the critical thinking proficiency assessment is required of all CAAP participants.



As an AQIP college, we are challenged to continuously ask "Are our students' learning outcomes consistent with our college mission and vision, and our commonly agreed upon learning objectives for students?" CAAP results – along with other measures of student success and institutional effectiveness – provide a plethora of data for decision-making and continuous improvement purposes. How we use these data for decision-making is one measure by which the Higher Learning Commission evaluates our commitment to continuous improvement. Regardless of the action projects that evolve at the college, discipline or program level following data review, *the questions we ask are at least as important as the data we review or the goals we set.*

In November 2008, Iowa Lakes must respond to **AQIP Systems Portfolio** questions related to how the college identifies and plans to provide for dynamic stakeholder needs –

3R1 What are your results for student satisfaction with your performance?

3R2 What are your results for the building of relationships with your students?

3I1 How do you improve your current processes and systems for understanding the needs of your key student and other stakeholder groups?

3I2 What specific improvement priorities are you targeting and how will these be addressed? How do you communicate your current results and improvement priorities to students, faculty, staff, administrators and appropriate stakeholders?

Surveys conducted by Iowa Lakes and others researching student and graduate perceptions are crucial to our response to these questions.

A new study of Iowa community college transfer students to Iowa State University provides a unique perspective of students' satisfaction with their community college experience. More than 600 Iowa community college transfer students (22 from Iowa Lakes Community College) participated in the study conducted by Frankie Santos Laanan and Larry H. Ebbers of ISU. The study, *Iowa Community College Transfer Students: Profiles, Experiences, and Perceptions (2008)*, revealed that respondents generally felt their community college experience prepared them for oral and written communication required to be successful at ISU. They also reported increased stress levels and a dip in GPA post-transfer.

When asked what their respective community colleges might have done to facilitate transition to Iowa State, students felt they needed:

- ✓ Time management skills,
- ✓ Test-taking skills,
- ✓ Advisors to be more knowledgeable about the transferability of credits, and
- ✓ Advisors to challenge them to take more difficult classes.

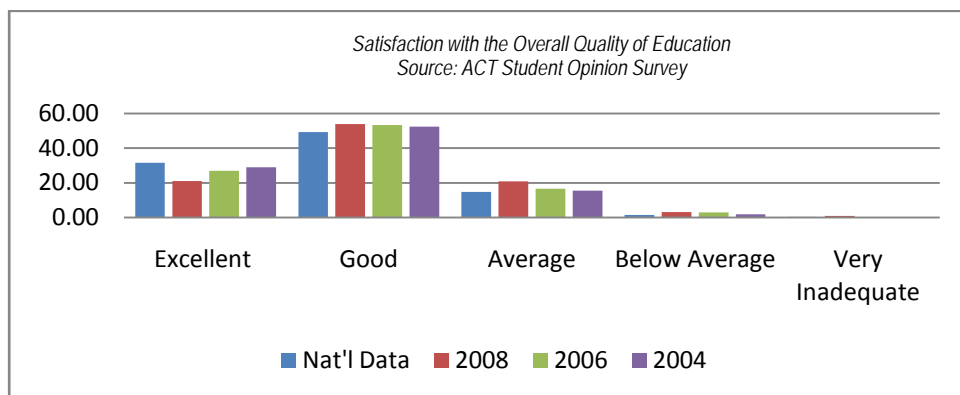
Fewer than 2 in 5 met with community college advisors on a regular basis.

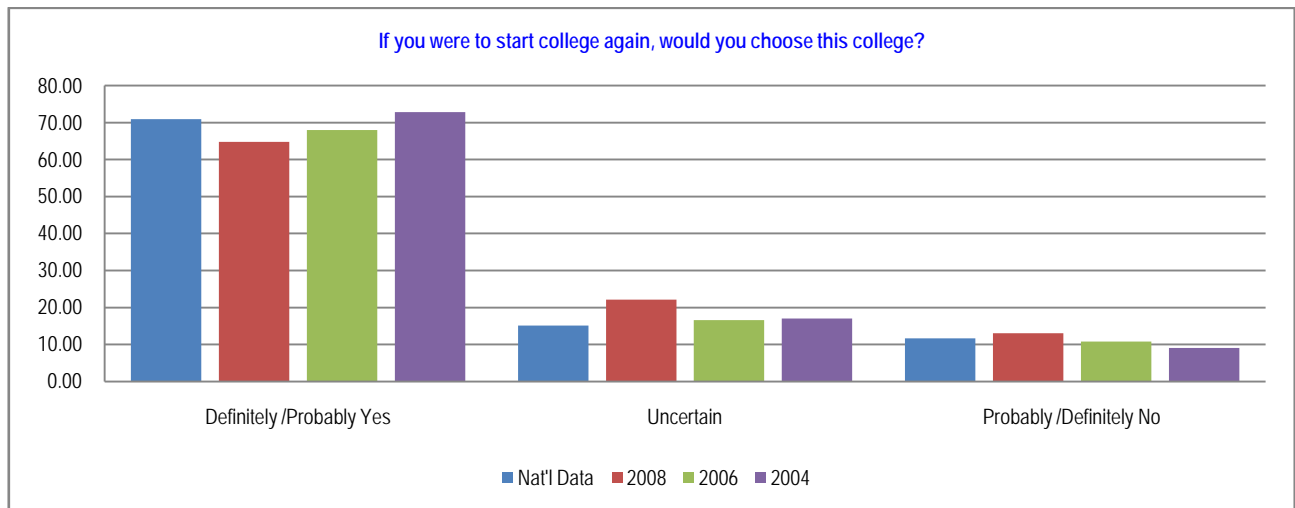
Comparison of community college and ISU course learning-related activities:

- ✓ 61.4% took detailed notes in class at ISU; only 39.4% reported taking detailed notes at their community college.
- ✓ 37.9% reported visiting with ISU faculty and seeking advice on class projects v. 46.1% when at their community college.
- ✓ 28.1% visited often or very often with ISU faculty after class v. 52.1% with their community college instructors.
- ✓ 82.0% often tried to see how different facts and ideas fit together at ISU compared to 76.1% while attending community colleges.
- ✓ 46% did not work or worked less than 10 hours per week while attending ISU; 25.6% worked less than 10 hours per week while attending community college.

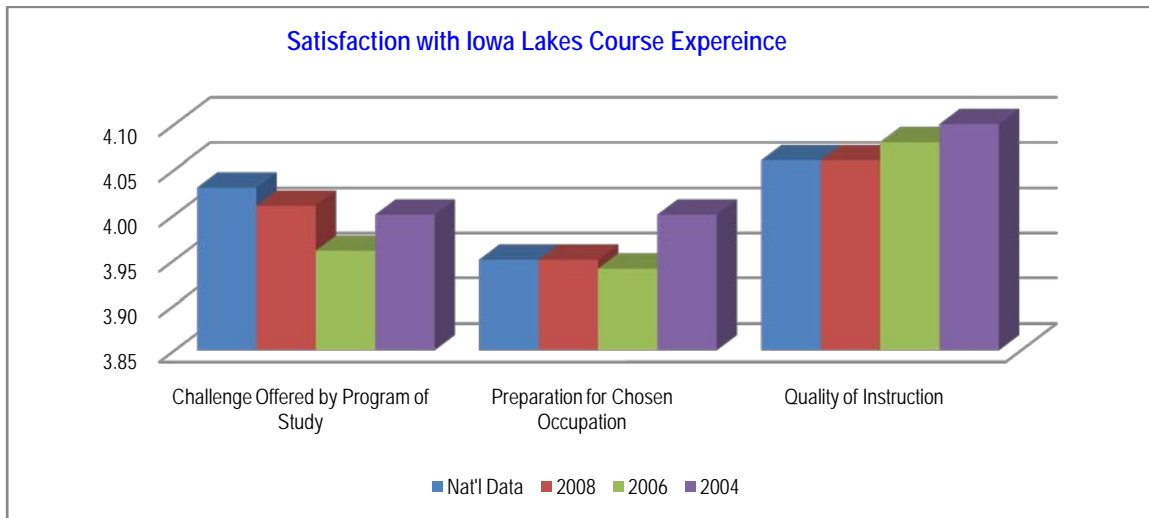
Survey data collected at various junctures in our students' college enrollment illustrate the level of student satisfaction with their Iowa Lakes experience.

Student Trends in Level of Satisfaction with Iowa Lakes

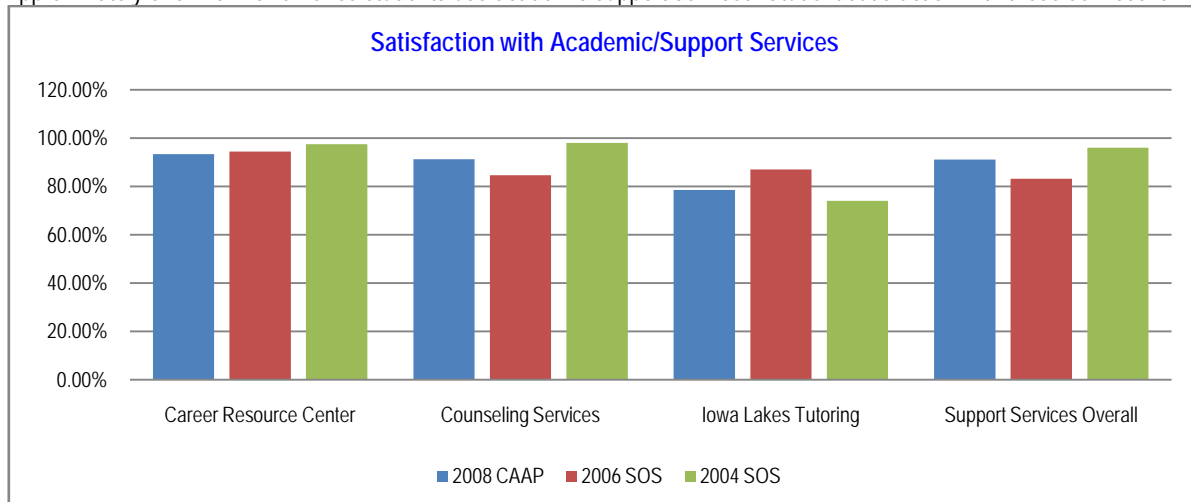




Based on historic trends, Iowa Lakes' students' perception of course rigor, quality of instruction in their major area, and preparation for their chosen occupation is similar to national trends.



Approximately one in six Iowa Lakes students use academic support services. Student satisfaction with these services is high.

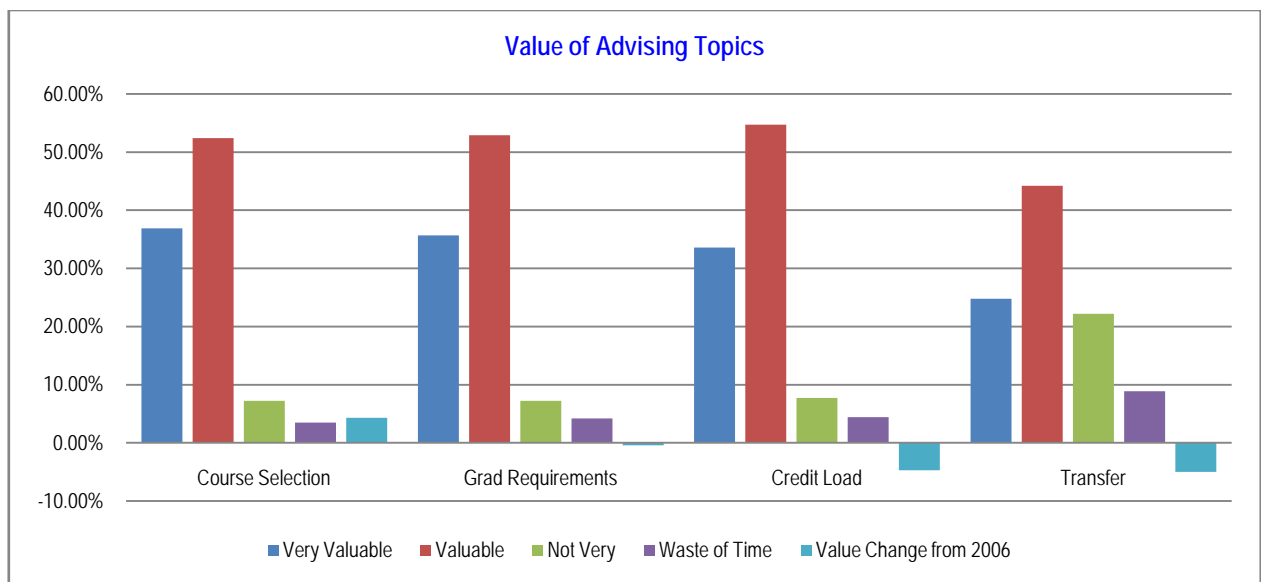


Advising services has been a collegewide focus since the AQIP Conversation Day in January 2005. The two-year college national average for per term student-advisor meetings is 3. In 2006, 50% of SOS participants reported never or once/term meeting with their assigned advisor and 34% three or more times per term; in 2008 42.3% met once per term or never and 40.1% met three or more times per term.

In 2008, SOS college-defined questions asked: "[*What is the average length of visit with your college-assigned faculty advisor for academic advising?*](#)"

<5 minutes per session	21.50%
5 - 15 min per session	49.60%
16 - 30 minutes per session	16.50%
31+ minutes per session	13.80%

Beginning in 2006, students were asked to rate the value of academic advising related to four specific topics: [a] course selection, [b] understanding graduation requirements, [c] taking appropriate course credit loads, and [d] preparing for 4-year college transfer.



Students completing the 2008 SOS rate the quality of their advising experience at Iowa Lakes as positive.

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2006</u>
Excellent	28.6%	29.0%
Good	42.1%	51.0%
Adequate	15.9%	15.0%
Poor	3.4%	5.0%

Participants of student focus groups conducted in spring 2008 by Enrollment Management Team members provided recommendations for advising process improvements. Nearly all of the participants felt it should be required to meet with an advisor before registering for classes. Many felt mid-term and end-of-term contacts were also important. The words of one non-traditional student sum up the discussion across participant demographics: "*There need to be mandatory advising sessions every semester. I thought I didn't need advising. I made all the mistakes. It cost be time and money for courses I didn't need to take that I thought I did. Some students won't like it, but it's the right thing to do.*"