

Title: Research on Inclusive Practices: Supporting Two-Year College Transfer Students in the Physics Community

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Abstract: Two-year colleges enroll almost half of the nation's undergraduate students (AACC, 2014). While nearly 40% enroll in STEM or health science degree programs (Van Noy & Zeidenber, 2014), only 13% of those who plan to earn a bachelor's degree will do so within 6-years (Horn & Skomsvold, 2011). Two-year college students are also more likely to come from underrepresented groups, low-income households, or first-generation backgrounds than students at four-year colleges (AACC, 2014). Considerable research has shown a connection between students' confidence in their ability to perform well (also known as self-efficacy) and persistence in science fields. In this presentation I will describe what we know about supporting community college students in pursuing physics and STEM pathways. I will also outline research on a successful program that provides transitional support to community college students pursuing a bachelor's degree in STEM.

Short Bio:

Vashti Sawtelle is physics education researcher who studies how learning environments support (or inhibit) students from diverse backgrounds in their learning physics. She co-directs the Physics Education Research Lab at Michigan State University (perl.natsci.msu.edu/) where her work focuses on understanding the role active learning, modeling, and interdisciplinary classrooms (i.e. physics for biologists) have to play in creating supportive learning environments for all students.