Points of interest:

- **Good news Student Services:** CLC students report to be more satisfied with career counseling and skill labs than those attending other Illinois community colleges.

- **Area for improvement Advising:** CLC students are less likely to have talked about academic advising with an academic advisor than those attending other Illinois community colleges.

Communication: CLC students used e-mail less often to communicate with an instructor than those attending other community colleges.

### 2007 CCSSE Survey

**About CCSSE**

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is a national survey of community college students focusing on educational practices shown to be related to student success.

For this survey, a sample of students was selected from each participating college. All students in selected courses were asked to participate. Excluded from the sample were labs, distance learning courses, independent projects, and studio classes.

The survey sampled 310,013 students from 525 colleges in 48 states. There were 575 students at the College of Lake County who responded to the survey in spring 2007.

**CLC Differs in Important Ways from the Average CCSSE College**

Most community colleges participating in CCSSE enroll more part-time than full-time students; however, CLC enrolls more (71%) than the CCSSE average proportion of part-time students (63%).

It is important to consider this when comparing CLC to other participating community colleges. Fortunately, the results of the CCSSE survey are separated into part-time and full-time students to make appropriate comparisons across schools.

The College of Lake County also differs from its CCSSE peers in its larger proportion of Latino students (23%) and a smaller proportion of African American students (8%) than the average CCSSE college (Latino 14%; African-American 14%). In addition, CLC enrolls proportionally less students from age 18 to 24 (50% vs. 56%).

These differences in student population are important to consider when interpreting the CCSSE data because it affects the validity of comparisons made between CLC and other colleges. The College of Lake County’s different population of students may explain why some of CLC’s survey results are significantly different from those of the average CCSSE school.

Unfortunately, results are not separated by student ethnicity, age group, or other student characteristics for more specific comparisons. As a result, the reader should bear in mind that some of the slight differences in average ratings on some items may be attributable, in part, to differences in student populations among colleges.

### Overall Results

Overall results show that there were areas of strength where the mean for CLC is above the average for the consortium of 9 Illinois community colleges that participated in this survey and the national CCSSE average. Similarly, there were areas for improvement where the mean for CLC was below these comparison groups. The differences were found to be statistically significant at p < .001 with an effect size greater than or equal to 0.2. Hence, only those differences of +/- 0.2 were highlighted in this report. For other engagement practices, CLC may be above or below other Illinois community colleges and the national average. However, these differences are very small.

**Comparison with Other Illinois Community Colleges**

In 2007, besides CLC, the following nine community colleges from Illinois par-
2007 CCSSE Survey continued...

participated in this national survey and formed part of a consortium or comparison group: Heartland, Joliet, McHenry, Parkland, Rend Lake, South Suburban, Spoon River, Truman, Wilbur Wright.

CLC students were less likely to use e-mail to communicate with an instructor (CLC mean = 2.22; peer group mean = 2.46). They also were less likely to use academic advising/planning than students from other Illinois community colleges (CLC = 1.57; peer group = 1.71). CLC full-time students rated the importance of financial aid advising less than this peer group (CLC = 2.22; peer group = 2.41). And they used academic advising/planning less often (CLC = 1.59; peer group = 1.77).

On the bright side, CLC students were more likely to be satisfied with career counseling (CLC = 2.13; peer group = 1.99) and skill labs (CLC = 2.33; peer group = 2.19). Also, CLC full-time students were more satisfied with career counseling (CLC = 2.13; peer group = 1.99) and with skill labs (CLC = 2.33; peer group = 2.19) than students from other Illinois community colleges.

Comparison with the National Community Colleges Average

Students at CLC work more hours than students from other community colleges nationwide. This may be one reason behind why CLC students fared below their national counterparts in how frequently they worked with classmates on assignments outside of class to prepare class assignments (CLC mean = 1.60; national mean = 1.84).

CLC students also were less likely to think that CLC emphasizes providing the financial support they need for their education (CLC = 2.14; national = 2.37). This may be related to the finding that CLC students work more hours than the average community college student.

Furthermore, CLC students rated financial aid advising less important than other community college students (CLC = 2.14; national = 2.37). They also use services less frequently (CLC =1.57; national = 1.74) and financial aid advising (CLC = 1.58; national = 1.8).

Results for CLC full-time students indicate areas for improvement in the following: 1) Experience at CLC contributed to their ability to acquire job or work-related knowledge and skills (CLC = 2.42; national = 2.62); 2) Use computing and information technology (CLC = 2.62; national = 2.83); 3) Use of financial aid advising (CLC = 1.58; national = 1.80); 4) Use of academic advising/planning services (CLC = 2.57; national = 1.74); 5) Work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments (CLC = 1.76; national =2.01); and 6) Importance of financial aid advising (CLC = 2.22; national = 2.48).

However, CLC full-time students were more likely than students from other colleges to indicate that transfer to a 4-year college or university was a factor that would cause them to withdraw from college (CLC = 2.90; national = 2.64).

Benchmarking Results

By grouping 38 engagement questions from the survey, CCSSE has a set of five benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges: Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Support for Learners. These areas were proven to be important in student learning, retention, and success.

While these benchmarks are useful in making comparisons between CLC and other Illinois community colleges, it is necessary to reiterate that community colleges differ from one another in size, location, resources, enrollment pattern, and student characteristics. Hence, caution should be used in interpreting the results of the benchmarks.

Overall benchmark results for all the five areas showed that CLC was below other Illinois community colleges and the national average.

Student-faculty interaction was the area that CLC’s benchmark score differed the most from the Illinois community colleges’ score (-4.8 points). Meanwhile, the least difference was found in support for learners and student effort benchmarks (-2.1 points below this peer group’s score).

Comparing CLC with the national peer group, the largest difference was in student-faculty interaction (-5.1 points). The least difference was in academic challenge (-2.9 points).

However, certain 2007 CLC benchmark scores showed improvement from that of 2005: student effort (+ 0.1 point), student-faculty interaction (+ 1.1 points), and support for learners (+ 1.4 points).

When the active and collaborative learning benchmark results are disaggregated by credit hour load, CLC students enrolled in 30 credit hours or more were almost at par with their Illinois community colleges counterparts.