El Paso Community College’s Achieving the Dream (AtD) journey began with the collection of data regarding how First Time in College (FTIC) students did on their Placement Exams when coming to the college. The information that was gathered from this activity provided information that was shared in a variety of settings. The first was the Community Advisory Committee meeting where these findings were shared with the Superintendent of the twelve local school districts, President of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), local business and industry representatives, and representatives from the local newspaper. This information was also shared with faculty teaching developmental courses in Math, English, and Reading at El Paso Community College (EPCC) and was shared with the rest of the college through Town Hall meetings that were held at all five campuses and the Administrative Services Center.

The use of this data allowed us to determine that it did not matter whether students were coming to the college directly from high school, less than one year after graduating, or whether they were coming to the college later in life. Either way, they were placing into developmental courses especially in Mathematics and to a lesser extent in Reading and Writing. The use of this data allowed the college to have very brave conversations with the different constituencies being brought together for these discussions. It developed into the creation of the College Readiness Consortium with the local school districts and UTEP to reduce the number of students coming to EPCC requiring remediation as well as bringing the faculty together for a common purpose to enhance Developmental Education (DE) in order to reduce the length of time that students were required to be in remediation.

The use of this initial data resulted in faculty requesting additional data be provided to answer some of the questions they needed to support the need for Curriculum Development they were proposing. This created the demand for the data which was faculty-driven. This resulted in the Faculty Data and Research team being created by the President of EPCC to create a more robust agenda for evaluation and research. The team is made up of faculty from the three DE areas of mathematics, English, and reading along with representatives from the college’s Institutional Technology and Institutional Research and Development areas.

The team used the evidence provided in data that was collected to evaluate the Achieving the Dream end of year self-evaluation study and continues to use the venue provided as a Data and Research Team to identify the data needed to evaluate the Developmental Education Initiative and other programs of the college as deemed necessary by the program directors.

The greatest accomplishment this has provided to EPCC is that now faculty are involved in using data and gathering evidence to answer some more robust questions regarding the success of pilots, initiatives, grant funded activities, and interventions implemented by areas of the college.