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This newsletter is published by Jobs for the Future for Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count, a national initiative to help more community college students succeed (earn degrees, earn certificates, or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies). The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that have faced the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color. See www.achievingthedream.org for more on the initiative and www.jff.org for more on Jobs for the Future.



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In this Issue

Welcome to the July 2008 issue of *Achieving Success*, the quarterly state policy newsletter of Achieving the Dream. In this issue, you'll find:

- A preview of *Test Drive*: This new JFF policy brief reports on the work the Florida Department of Education has done in conjunction with the Achieving the Dream Cross-State Data Workgroup to assess the power of particular intermediate measures of student success.
- An interview with Kevin Carey of Education Sector: He discusses his recent report, *Graduation Rate Watch: Making Minority Student Success a Priority*, and its implications for community college leaders and decision makers. Carey examines the gap in graduation rates between white and minority students in four-year colleges, explains how some institutions have reduced or eliminated it, and draws implications for state policy.
- A cross-state comparative analysis of state policies on performance measures: the 15 Achieving the Dream states are using these measures to encourage student success. The chart also brings attention to areas where new or revised measures could help support improved student outcomes.
- Updates on recent policy developments and accomplishments in Achieving the Dream states and links to useful resources for policymakers.

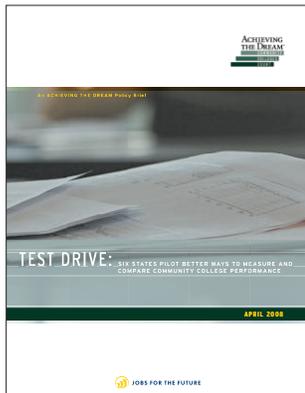
We are always looking for new subscribers for *Achieving Success*. Please send email addresses for anyone you think should receive this newsletter (free, of course) to Jeff Wetherhold, jwetherhold@jff.org. We particularly want to reach readers in state offices, two-year institutions, and education research and policy organizations.

POLICY BRIEF PREVIEW

Test Drive: Six States Pilot Better Ways to Measure and Compare Community College Performance

Faced with burgeoning enrollments and stagnating completion rates, states have a growing interest in strengthening their community college data and performance measurement systems to better track student progress and success. Since 2006, six Achieving the Dream states—the Cross-State Data Work Group—have

taken on the challenge of crafting new intermediate and final measures of student progress. These states have worked together to design a more complete and accurate way of measuring student performance over time and comparing results to others nationwide.



The six-state Work Group began by addressing the limitation of the current federal approach to measuring community college performance. Each year, the federal Graduation Rate Survey asks colleges to report the number of full-time, first-time undergraduates who have completed a degree or certificate within 150 percent of the “normal time” to completion. For community colleges, this method is too simplistic: it does not track outcomes for part-time students, who comprise a large proportion of enrollments; it defines success only as earning a degree or certificate, even though an important part of these schools’ missions is transferring students to four-year institutions; and it imposes a three-year time limit, which is not long enough for many students to complete outcomes.

Designing a New Approach to Measuring Performance

The Work Group defined several important modifications to the federal method for reporting community college performance and carefully tested the new measures to assess their accuracy (*see table*). Among the most significant changes are: extending the time frame for tracking student outcomes from three years after

initial enrollment to six years; tracking the performance of students who initially enrolled part-time; and expanding the list of successful outcomes to include transfer to a four-year institution as well as substantial progress toward a degree by the sixth year.

The Work Group’s pilot testing demonstrated that this approach to defining and measuring student success yielded more accurate and useful information about community colleges than the federal method. Extending the time frame for tracking student outcomes from three to six years resulted in a substantial increase in the percentage of students reported as achieving a successful outcome. These gains were particularly substantial for part-time students and those who started in developmental education. For example, in Florida the rate for students who began full-time nearly doubled, from 19 to 35 percent. For students who began part-time, graduation rates nearly tripled, from 7 to 20 percent. Other findings included substantially higher success rates for full-time and younger students compared to part-time and older students, and significant differences in transfer patterns and rates among states.

COMPARING COMMUNITY COLLEGE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	Current Federal Method	Achieving the Dream State Work Group Method
Prior enrollment	First-time-in-college students only	Same as federal method
Intent at time of enrollment	Only students seeking a certificate or degree	Same as federal method
Enrollment status	Full-time students only	Full-time and part-time students
Successful outcomes	Earned degree or certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earned degree or certificate (with or without transfer) - Transferred without award - Enrolled in year six with at least 30 college credit hours
Time frame	Three years (150% of “normal time” to completion)	Six years
Tracking students who transfer within two-year-college sector	Reporting is based on individual colleges; does not track outcomes of students who transfer to another college; colleges report them simply as “transferred out”	Reporting is based on statewide community college system; tracks outcomes of students within the system (and therefore across community colleges)
Controlling for factors associated with different likelihoods of success	Part-time students excluded from analysis; no disaggregation of results by age at initial enrollment	Disaggregated results by part-time and full-time status and age at initial enrollment

Policy Implications

A comparative analysis of the pilot test results demonstrated the many critical ways that state policy can drive improved outcomes for community college students. For example, significant differences among Work Group states in rates of transfer to four-year colleges and in the rates of students who transfer with or without an Associate's degree reflect important differences in each state's higher education policies and in the role of community colleges in that state's postsecondary system. Some states' policies encourage students to earn an Associate's degree prior to transferring, while others encourage students to transfer after earning core general education credits but not necessarily the full degree.

The Work Group plans to continue to refine its approach to measuring community college performance, while

expanding its analysis to track changes in system performance over time. Several other Achieving the Dream states will be joining the Work Group and participating in this ongoing comparative analysis. The ultimate goal is to design a set of measures that accurately describe and track the multiple successful outcomes that community college students attain—and to identify more accurately the warning signs that identify students who will have trouble completing their programs of study early in their careers. This fuller and richer set of measures will help colleges tell a more complete story of their students' educational progress—and help them move more quickly to implement interventions that can improve the performance and outcomes of struggling students.

To download Test Drive, go to www.achievingthedream.org or www.jff.org.

Q & A

Shout It from the Rooftops: Kevin Carey Talks about Publishing College Performance Data—In a Very Public Way



Kevin Carey

In April 2008, Kevin Carey, the Research and Policy Manager at Education Sector, published a report that dismissed excuses, blew away assumptions, and named names. In Graduation Rate Watch: Making Minority Success a Priority, Carey identified those four-year colleges and universities that have eliminated or reduced graduation rate gaps between black and white students, and he also called on the carpet those institutions that have not—sometimes tolerating graduation rate gaps of over 40 percent.

Carey's report reinforces the themes of Achieving the Dream: that improving low-income and minority student success is not only possible but is in fact being done; that using data to constantly monitor

performance is critical; that state accountability systems and need-based financial aid are key policy levers for improving student success; and that making student success a priority—at the institutional and policy level—can make all the difference in the world for students.

Perhaps most important, and also in line with Achieving the Dream, Carey shows via statistics and in-depth profiles that there are colleges and universities that have jettisoned the excuses, refusing to rely any longer on the well-worn assumption that certain groups of students should not be expected to succeed at the same rates as others. Carey's provocative conclusions and recommendations are important guideposts for change and improvement.

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Education Sector, a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank in Washington, DC, works on both K–12 and higher education issues. Its mission “is to promote changes in policy and practice that lead to improved student opportunities and outcomes.”

To download the full report, please visit: www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/Graduation_Rate_Watch.pdf.

Kevin, we would like to begin by asking what motivated you to undertake this study, and what did you learn?

Kevin Carey: Education Sector’s work in undergraduate education is grounded in the idea that while we have a higher education system that serves the top ten percent of students quite well, beyond that there are too many students who are not receiving a high quality undergraduate education. This situation is dire for both the students and for the nation at large.

Graduation Rate Watch focuses on minority graduation rates at four-year colleges and universities. Overall, minority graduation rates in four-year institutions are low—less than half of all black and Latino students who begin college as first-time, full-time degree seeking freshmen will earn a degree within six years, and at many institutions those numbers are much lower. At public universities, graduation rates for black students typically range from 30 to 40 percent. In addition, colleges typically have a gap of about ten percentage points between the graduation rates of their white students and their black students.

Institutions will often explain away low production rates by citing whom they serve, or how much money they have, or where they are located. And there’s truth in that. But when you look *inside* an institution, all those things are equally true for *all* of their students. When you have large internal disparities, it is a sign that something is wrong and that something needs to improve.

The good news is that, while a nine or ten percentage point gap is typical, it is not universal. Some institutions are consis-

tently able to succeed with their minority students. Using data from the federal Graduation Rate Survey, we compared groups of institutions that are very similar—similar missions and levels of per-student funding and similar incoming freshman profiles in terms of SAT scores and the percent of students on Pell Grants. We found that within those groups, graduation rates will vary by 10, 15, or 20 percentage points. [Ed. note: Visit the *College Results Web site*, www.college-results.org, to see more of this data and run institutional comparisons.] We now have six years of federal data to look at, so it allows us to speak with a little more confidence about individual institutions. The data suggest that there is something going on inside the institutions themselves that has an impact on whether students finish and earn their degrees. Some institutions have tackled their graduation rate gaps. They are succeeding, and other institutions can learn from them.

Florida State University, which we highlight in the report, has for six consecutive years had either a very small graduation rate gap or has graduated its black students at a higher rate than its white students. They have a higher graduation rate for black students than the University of Florida, which is a more selective institution. This led us to look closely at what Florida State does differently. We learned that they have a very well designed and robust orientation and retention program for first-generation students, the majority of whom are minority students. Obviously, what they are doing is making a difference.

What do you consider to be the most critical messages stemming from this report?

The most important message is that what colleges do matters when it comes to college graduation rates. This might seem obvious, but this idea is not reflected in the way that colleges and policymakers think about graduation rates. As a result, not enough attention is given to what colleges can do to help students graduate.

The data suggest that there is something going on inside the institutions themselves that has an impact on whether students finish and earn their degrees.

One reason that college graduation rates are so variable among similar institutions, and so low overall, is that the system of incentives within which colleges operate does not push them to help their students earn degrees. Financing is predominantly enrollment-driven; from a financial standpoint, it makes more sense to focus on how many students are beginning than on how many students are finishing. Other incentive systems in American higher education, such as the status hierarchy and the ranking systems among colleges and universities, do not reflect what institutions do with their students while they are enrolled.

Now, no college is trying to *not* graduate students. But that's not the same thing as saying that maximizing graduation rates is an overwhelming priority. There are a lot of straightforward things that colleges could do that they aren't doing because the incentives aren't there. So one of the main ways to attack the problem of low graduation rates is to change the incentives: let's motivate institutions to focus on student completion.

You just said, "There are a lot of straightforward things that colleges could do that they aren't doing." What strategies you would recommend?

First of all, colleges cannot wait until students show up to start wondering about what support they will need to graduate. The majority of higher education institutions take a large percentage of their student population from a defined number of local high schools. They know where their students are coming from. Yet you don't see two-way communication between the higher education sector and the K-12 sector. Institutions need to reach out to their local high schools and say:

- Here's what your students need to know in order to succeed; and
- Here are the standards that we will be assessing them against when we decide whether they're ready for college-level work or whether they need remedial classes.

This is what California State University does in its Early Assessment Program, which allows high school juniors to take college placement tests to learn whether they are on track to be college ready. Students who aren't ready can take courses in their senior year, and the program provides other supports to help them prepare. Why aren't all institutions doing what California State University is doing? I can see no reason why every other institution—or system of institutions—that takes a lot of students from a local area is not giving students a chance to find out whether they will actually be ready for college-level work while there is still time to make corrections.

Summer bridge programs, like the one at Florida State for first-generation students, are another effective way of increasing student preparation and collaborating with local high schools. There also needs to be, particularly in the freshman year, intense attention to students' progression. The University of Alabama has an early warning system that follows students week-by-week in the first months of college; it tracks whether they are going to class, whether they are withdrawing from classes, and how they are doing on their first exams. If the alarm bells go off, there are people whose job is to contact the students right away.

This needs to be a coordinated effort. At Florida State, the same people do all of this work—reach out to students in middle and high school, help them to make the transition to college over the summer, help them in their freshman year, and stay with them all the way through to graduation. Those functions should not be cut up into pieces and implemented in an uncoordinated way by different people in different offices.

A final message actually comes from the provost of Florida State University, who has said that their program is not a cheap endeavor, but it's a priority, and priorities are what get funded. That's an important message. People should not think that this is something you can just snap your

Transparency is a form of accountability, and it's a particularly appropriate form of accountability for higher education.

fingers and do. At the same time, it's about prioritization—put simply, important things are the things that you devote resources to.

One Achieving the Dream goal is to make sure that lessons learned from participating colleges spread across all of a state's community colleges. How can states promote the best work that colleges are doing, and how can they reward colleges that are performing well?

Here are a few recommendations for policymakers:

Set goals. First of all, state policymakers should set graduation goals for their institutions. Those goals reflect the specific mission of the institution and the kinds of students they enroll. A reasonable goal for an institution is to try to be as good as the best of its peers. To the extent that institutions meet those goals, that should make a difference in how the institution is seen publicly, and in leadership decisions such as hiring and financial rewards. Student success needs to matter in a very public context, and that prioritization needs to come from the top—it needs to come from system leadership, from the board of regents, from the legislature, and from the governor's office.

Create incentives. It also makes sense to create incentives for institutions to look beyond enrollment. What if we financed institutions based on the number of students who make it to the *end* of the semester, since we lose a lot of students in that first few weeks? What if a portion of the base budget is based on the number of students who complete or meet their goals? Intuitively, performance funding makes an awful lot of sense. People care about money, so if you tie money to a policy goal, then people will care about that policy goal. But institutions have always fought hard to make sure that performance funding does not come out of base funding, so they can never get hurt by it—they want only positive incentives to get new money. The problem is that new money is always the first thing to go during budget cutbacks, so for performance funding to really matter it

needs to be institutionalized in a way that allows it to persist through the business cycle. It ought not to be optional that institutions focus their time and effort on maximizing graduation rates, and that means that some of the performance funding has to come into base budget allocations.

Differentiate by mission. Now, if you did this in isolation, one could foresee all kinds of problems and perverse incentives. It is important to nest incentives in a larger context that also pays attention to the quality of academics, so you don't have a system of incentives to just move students through. We also must pay attention to mission differentiation so that schools don't simply try to recruit students who are more likely to graduate. There needs to be a way for institutions to be great at serving the students they are tasked with serving, and to be recognized for being great at that.

For the community college sector, which has embraced the open access mission, this is particularly important. Looking at completion in the context of peer performance would give community colleges an opportunity to distinguish themselves in a way that the current status hierarchy does not. Right now, I don't see community colleges being rewarded for high performance. There doesn't seem to be any difference between a 60 percent and a 20 percent graduation rate. Rewarding institutions for unusual success relative to their peers would be great for the best community colleges, and it would give new incentives for other community colleges to be better.

Publicize data. I wish that more state organizations were not just making data about college performance available but were publicizing the data as well. This data about the four-year sector has been out there for four years now. Anybody could have done what we did. Colleges and universities are very sensitive about their public image. I think that state policymakers should be shouting from the rooftops about college completion rates

Right now, all colleges would like more of their students to graduate, but they can operate comfortably graduating the number they're graduating now. That's what needs to change.

for individual institutions. I think a lot of students don't realize that at some colleges, their odds of getting a degree are long, particularly if they're a minority student.

I think that state organizations should get the message out, publicize this data in a very public way, and make unambiguous the extent to which specific institutions are succeeding or not succeeding in helping their students earn degrees. Transparency is a form of accountability, and it's a particularly appropriate form of accountability for higher education. I don't want the states or the federal government regulating how colleges and universities do their business. But from a policy standpoint, getting the word out to the public and to consumers is important.

Improve the data. If we're going to publicize data, then we also need better data. We need better measures of retention and graduation, particularly for the two-year sector. We need to go four, five, six years out; track students over time; and track them as they move between sectors—especially since we have set transfer up as a goal of the two-year sector—to find out what happens to students in the long run.

The good news is that there are states that can do this right now. So if you're a state policymaker and you have a really good higher education data system, then use it. Set up new measures and hold community colleges accountable for a better measure than the federal graduation rate. And if you don't have a good higher education data system, you ought to get one, because that is what your institutions need in order to be held accountable fairly.

Finally, states can advocate for better data at the federal level. The federal graduation rate data does not allow us to make important distinctions, such as by income, age, or first-generation status. Right now, we are calculating graduation rates by whether students are on the football team, basketball team, or run cross-country. If we can track that, then we can track whether or not they're first-generation

students, Pell Grant students, or other far more important things.

The current measures aren't right, but they can be changed. Go to your elected representatives and the Department of Education, explain the issues, and provide alternatives. However, we can't complain about inaccuracy and at the same time complain about the burden of reporting requirements. We either need to do what it takes in terms of resources and cooperation to get better data, or we have to live with the data.

Do you have any final advice or recommendations?

There is a difference between what colleges would *like* to do and what they *have* to do. Right now, all colleges would like more of their students to graduate, but they can operate comfortably graduating the number they're graduating now. That's what needs to change. There is no reason to think that graduation rates will improve if we don't make some serious changes to the incentive systems under which colleges and universities operate. We must make student success matter more than it does now.

Finally, I hope that institutions will look at this data and say, "We can do better. We must do better. Now let's go find out what our peers who have already done better are doing, and learn from that."

Most *Achieving the Dream* states are making efforts to link performance measures to near- and long-term goals.

Performance Measures that Promote Student Success: A Comparative Analysis of State Policies

Many states are revisiting their performance measurement systems to create incentives for student success. In the 2007 policy brief *Power Tools*, Jobs for the Future described essential features of successful state performance measurement systems. In spring 2008, JFF surveyed the fifteen *Achieving the Dream* states about performance measures currently in place for community colleges and how they align with the recommendations in *Power Tools*. Twelve states responded with data; Arkansas and Pennsylvania have no community college performance measures, and Michigan did not report data. See the summary chart on page 5 for complete results.

Recommendation #1: Use a limited number of intermediate and long-term performance indicators that are clearly tied to a defined set of strategic priorities appropriate to each mission area.

Ten *Achieving the Dream* states have built intermediate success measures into their performance measurement systems. The bulk of these address student persistence: nine states have established at least one such measure. Six states have adopted intermediate measures in other areas. Florida, North Carolina, and Washington have specified measures for student success in adult basic education. Connecticut, Florida, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington have measures for student success in developmental education. Massachusetts, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington have measures tracking student success in gatekeeper courses or credit completion.

More often, states' performance measurement emphasizes more final measures of success. Twelve states include at least one indicator related to completion, most typically the number of degrees conferred and/or a graduation

rate. Eight states have a performance measure related to student transfer. While *Achieving the Dream* discussions of student success often use a success rate combining persistence, graduation, and transfer, only Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas use such a rate in their performance measures.

Recommendation #2: Set goals and benchmarks that provide clear incentives and reasonable time frames for institutions to focus on raising the success rates of underprepared and historically underserved students.

Most *Achieving the Dream* states are making efforts to link performance measures to near- and long-term goals. Six of the twelve states have set specific numeric goals for all of their performance measures. Ten of the twelve have specific goals for some of their measures. Overall, approximately two-thirds of the performance measures in place in *Achieving the Dream* states are accompanied by specific targets for performance.

Recommendation #3: Disaggregate performance measures by high-priority subgroups so the state can track the progress that community colleges make in increasing their success rates.

As yet, few *Achieving the Dream* states have implemented performance measures that disaggregate data on student success and report results for any of these target populations. Only South Carolina and Texas disaggregate persistence rates by student-level characteristics, and only Florida, Ohio, and Texas require disaggregation of graduation rates by student-level characteristics.

Achieving the Dream State Performance Measures

	AR	CT	FL	HI	MA	MI	NC	NM	OH	OK	PA	SC	TX	VA	WA	n	%
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION																	
Student success in adult basic education (ABE) or basic skills courses	n/a	n/a	G	n/a	n/a	n/a	G		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	G	3	75%*
DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION																	
Retention of students in developmental education													G			1	7%
Developmental education course completion							G								M	2	13%
Developmental education sequence completion		G	M										G			3	20%
Success of developmental education completers in college-level coursework			M													1	7%
GATEKEEPER COURSE AND CREDIT COMPLETION																	
Student success in a gatekeeper course							G						G		M	3	20%
Course completion					G											1	7%
Achievement of designated credit totals															M	1	7%
PERSISTENCE																	
First-semester (fall-to-spring) retention rate					M		G									2	13%
One-year (fall-to-fall) retention rate		G			M		G						M	G		5	33%
Two-year retention rate													M			1	7%
Three-year retention rate				M								M				2	13%
Six-year retention rate													M			1	7%
Retention rate for students completing a specified number of credits			G													1	7%
Retention rate disaggregated by student-level characteristics												M	M			2	13%
COMPLETION																	
Number of degrees conferred		G	M	M	G				G	M			M	G	M	9	60%
Three-year graduation rate		G		M						M		M	G	G		6	40%
Four-year graduation rate													G			1	7%
Six-year graduation rate													G			1	7%
Graduation rate, duration unspecified							G									1	7%
Graduation rate for students completing a specified number of credits			G					G								2	13%
Improvement in graduation rate over time									G							1	7%
Graduation rate disaggregated by student-level characteristics			M						G				G			3	20%
Students' success in meeting reported educational goals		G														1	7%
TRANSFER																	
Transfer rate or count			G	M			G					M	M	G		6	40%
Number of transfer-eligible students															G	1	7%
Number of transfer agreements														G		1	7%
Student success following transfer to four-year			M	G			G	G					G			5	33%
COMBINED SUCCESS RATE																	
Combined retention, completion, and transfer rate			G				G					M	M			4	27%

Key: M = Performance Measure G = Performance Measure and Goal

* For ABE measures, the sample is restricted to the four Achieving the Dream states that currently administer adult education programs through a higher education organization
NOTE: No community college performance measures exist in Arkansas and Pennsylvania; Michigan has not reported data

Connecticut Holds Forum on Financial Aid Reform

On June 16, the Connecticut Community College system sponsored a forum to discuss next steps in improving financial aid for community college students. In his opening remarks, Chancellor Marc Herzog talked about several of Connecticut's successes in this area. Need-based financial aid to Connecticut community college students has increased by 80 percent over the past eight years, and 90 percent of current financial aid is in the form of grants. Deborah Frankle-Cochrane, a Research Analyst at the Institute for College Access and Success, presented findings from the institute's recent report, *Green Lights and Red Tape: Improving Access to Financial Aid at California's Community Colleges*. She focused on steps that financial aid administrators could take to increase student access and the need to carefully coordinate financial aid reforms to achieve desired outcomes.

www.commmnet.edu/news.asp
www.ticas.org/pub_view.php?idx=274

Florida Restructures Higher Education System, Expands Role of Community Colleges

On June 12, Florida Governor Charlie Crist signed the State College Bill, formally restructuring the state's public postsecondary system. One of the bill's most notable and controversial provisions is the creation of a pilot program through which nine Florida community colleges will offer an increased number of Bachelor's degrees to students. Proponents of the measure say that Florida's four-year universities are at or near capacity, and that the affordability of community colleges will help meet the state's overwhelming need to grant more Bachelor's degrees. Others worry about the potential dilution of community colleges' mission and the risks of putting these institutions in competition with four-year research universities. Formal recommendations will be made to the legislature regarding next steps and a revised funding model for the system.

www.mwfailynews.com/news/college_8610__article.html/bill_down.html
www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/06/16/florida

Florida Continues to Build K-20 Partnership for Developmental Education

As part of the state's ongoing effort to streamline developmental education coursework and create a seamless K-20 educational system, the Florida legislature recently required that all eleventh-grade students who have an interest in college attendance and who meet minimum score requirements on the state's placement exam be tested for college readiness. Students identified as college-ready can forego developmental coursework at the state's community colleges if they enroll within two years. For students who are not yet college ready, the state is also taking steps to extend its developmental education curriculum to its high schools. At a recent summit, 17 community colleges and their primary feeder school districts met to discuss how to incorporate developmental education coursework into the state's high schools.

http://facts23.facts.org/navigation/detail/college_credit.do?pageId=16

Hawaii Legislature Mandates Performance Funding Plan

The Hawaii legislature recently passed a bill requiring the University of Hawaii system to designate part of its annual budget to a performance funding initiative for its institutions, including all seven of Hawaii's community colleges. Hawaii House Bill 2978 mandates that the system designate 2 percent of its budget to rewarding institutions for meeting performance goals included in the system's strategic plan. A task force has been established to help develop a funding formula for the system, which will be implemented beginning summer 2009.

www.hawaii.edu/offices/cc/index.html



Michigan Community College Association Proposes New Jobs Training Program

As part of Michigan's ongoing effort to address statewide workforce goals through the community college system, the state legislature is considering a proposal to create a New Jobs Training Program. The program would allow the state's 28 community colleges to extend loans for job training expenses to employers who create additional job opportunities in Michigan. Under the plan, the state would forego increases in state tax revenue resulting from employees' wage increases. This increased revenue would be forwarded to the community college issuing the loans, thereby covering both principal and interest costs. A similar program has been successfully implemented in Iowa.

www.mcca.org

New Mexico Hosts Statewide Conference on ABE and Developmental Education

The New Mexico Higher Education Department is hosting a statewide *Transitions to College Forum* on July 18. The purpose is to highlight areas where policy reforms can help to facilitate student transitions from adult basic education to developmental education. Members of the New Mexico State Legislature will join a broad cross-section of educational professionals from New Mexico's community colleges, tribal colleges, and ABE program offices. Elaine DeLott Baker, principal investigator for the Colorado Lumina Initiative for Performance, will serve as the keynote speaker and help develop an action plan and next steps for the state.

<http://hed.state.nm.us>

North Carolina Colleges Forbidden from Enrolling Undocumented Immigrants

On May 6, the North Carolina Attorney General's Office distributed a letter to the state's 58 community colleges advising them to immediately cease enrolling undocumented immigrants. The letter directly contradicts a memo drafted by the North Carolina Community College System in November 2007, which notified institutions that they must accept undocumented

immigrants as part of their open-admissions policy. The letter, signed by the North Carolina Department of Justice's General Counsel, J.B. Kelly, states that, "federal law makes certain non-citizens ineligible for State and local public benefits.... That definition includes 'postsecondary education.'"

North Carolina Community College System President R. Scott Ralls advised that they abide by the state's ruling. President Ralls further stated that currently enrolled undocumented immigrants could finish their course of study only at an out-of-state tuition rate.

The letter from the North Carolina Attorney General's Office has been posted on the Web courtesy of the *Raleigh News and Observer*.

www.newsobserver.com/content/news/story_graphics/20080507_community_collegeletter.pdf

Ohio Program Facilitates Transfer of Technical Education Credits to Community Colleges

As part of the state's effort to encourage working adults to enroll in its community colleges, Ohio has instituted the Career-Technical Credit Transfer Program. The program rewards applicants for credits completed in identified fields of study at the state's adult education centers. Currently, a faculty committee is evaluating courses in automotive technology, computer networking, electrical and mechanical engineering technology, medical assisting, and nursing. Ohio's program is a valuable model for states looking to increase the links between workforce education and postsecondary credentials. This initiative was profiled in the June 6 *Chronicle of Higher Education*. http://chronicle.com/weekly/v54/i39/39a02201.htm?utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Oklahoma Moves to Require Reporting on Remediation Rates

Oklahoma is taking a significant step in sharing data on the remediation needs of its high school graduates. Superintendent Sandy Garrett has proposed a new annual

requirement for junior high and high schools to report directly to the state’s school board on how many of their graduates who go on to enroll in public higher education need remediation in reading, English, math, and science. Garrett’s proposal has been met with mostly positive reactions across the state: it has been unanimously approved by the school board and is expected to receive the approval of Governor Brad Henry. www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/05/14/37stjour.h27.html?levelId=2300&print=1&

Pennsylvania Unveils New Online Transfer Resource

As part of its ongoing effort to create a seamless statewide transfer and articulation system, Pennsylvania recently launched its online Transfer and Articulation Center—PA TRAC. The PA TRAC Web site is intended to serve as a central information warehouse for students, faculty, and administrators. It includes information about the state’s Transfer Credit Framework—credits from within this framework are guaranteed to transfer and count toward graduation at any participating institution. It provides a direct link to an online database where students can search for courses or search

course offerings by institution. PA TRAC also serves as a hub for information on transfer course equivalencies, institutional profiles, and transfer guidance. www.patrac.org

South Carolina Launches Transfer Bridge Program for Technical College Students

The University of South Carolina and the South Carolina Technical College System are set to launch a statewide Bridge Program. The program is a collaborative effort to expand student success programs offered in four-year public institutions to the two-year sector for students who plan to transfer. This program, which had previously been available to students at two technical colleges, is designed to ensure a more seamless transfer process from two-year to four-year institutions in South Carolina, particularly for first-time college attendees. Participating students receive an early introduction to student services professionals at a four-year campus and are matched with a former transfer student from that campus the semester before transferring. The SC Bridge Program will be implemented beginning in fall 2008. www.sctechsystem.com/1129_bridgeagreement.pdf

RESOURCES

Fifty-State Policy Resources

NCHEMS Report Catalogues State Policies on Student Transitions

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems report, *State Policies on Student Transitions: Results of a Fifty-State Inventory*, by Peter Ewell, Marianne Boeke, and Stacy Zis, presents results from a comprehensive 50-state survey of state higher education leaders regarding policies affecting student transitions at four critical junctures: high school to college, pre-college to college-level work, from two-year to four-year college, and graduation.

Several sections of the report are particularly relevant to Achieving the Dream states and organizations with a focus on student success. The discussion of pre-college to college-level work concentrates on developmental education assessment and placement policies, including whether states set common placement instruments and cut scores. These data represent a critical benchmark in state developmental education policies.

The report’s discussion of the two-year to four-year transition presents information on policies related to student transfer of

credits and degrees: whether statewide transfer policies are in place; what type of institutions these policies govern; whether common core general education curricula are in place; and whether states have established a course transfer matrix.

The authors conclude that there has been a great deal of recent development in these policy areas, and that these developments have become more integrated and directive over time. They also point to future challenges, including the gap between K-12 and postsecondary policies, loose ties between policies and learning outcomes, and uneven enforcement of policies. The report and state-by-state narrative summaries are posted on the NCHEMS Web site.

www.nchems.org/c2sp/transitions.php

SUNY Brief Profiles States and Their Community Colleges

The State University of New York's Rockefeller Institute of Government has issued *The States and Their Community Colleges*, by David F. Shaffer. This policy brief reveals that community college systems vary widely from state to state with regard to a number of variables, including:

- **Enrollment:** Community colleges' share of all higher education enrollments varies from 47 percent (Wyoming) to 8 percent (Vermont). The share of the total adult population enrolled in a community college varies from more than 5 percent (California) to less than 1 percent (Louisiana, South Dakota, and Nevada).
- **Growth:** The growth rate in community college enrollment for 2000-05 varies from 67 percent (West Virginia) to -17 percent (Louisiana). Overall, enrollment in community colleges increased in 44 states during this period.
- **Finance:** The average tuition and fees for community colleges as a percentage of the tuition and fees for four-year publics varies from 62 percent (New Hampshire) to 15 percent (California).

The brief concludes that this variation is enough reason to examine state policies on community colleges closely and contextually, and that there are ample lessons to be learned from individual states.

www.rockinst.org/publications/education/higher_education/default.aspx?id=348&ekmense=12_submenu_132_link_1

AACC Survey Focuses on Funding Issues Facing Community Colleges

Funding Issues in U.S. Community Colleges, from the American Association of Community Colleges, reports on the third installment of a regular survey of state community college administrators. The results have been distilled into 15 core trends in current and future funding issues, with a special section on trends in campus facilities. These trends focus on several key concerns, including deteriorating state support, rising tuition costs, and the increased pressure placed on community colleges in the face of more limited access to public, four-year institutions. The AACC report is a timely update on the challenges facing the two-year sector and the diverse strategies being employed across the states.

www2.aacc.nche.edu/pdfs/FundingIssues.pdf

Joint Report Provides State Profiles on Adult Learners

Adult Learning in Focus, from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, presents available knowledge about adult participation in higher education state-by-state and sheds light on gaps in this knowledge. It includes information on accessibility, enrollment and demographic profiles, and affordability, including state and employer support for adult enrollment. Profiles are included for all 50 states. A comprehensive guide for policymakers emphasizes, among other challenges, inconsistency in the availability of data on adult learners across states.

www.cael.org/adultlearninginfocus.htm





OVAE Launches Electronic Compendium of Community College Resources

The Community College Compendium, a new electronic publication from the Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education, reports on recent publications, resources, meetings, events, and funding opportunities from the agency.

www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclcol/index.html

Strategies for Student Success

Three Studies Offer a Mixed View of Developmental Education

The July 4 *Chronicle of Higher Education* profiles three studies on the effects of developmental education on student persistence and success. Collectively, these studies offer mixed evidence on the benefits of developmental coursework based on samples from three Achieving the Dream states:

- Bridget Terry Long of Harvard University and Juan Carlos Calcagno of the Community College Research Center examined a sample of nearly 100,000 Florida community college students and concluded that developmental education had no significant effect on persistence or completion of college-level coursework.
- Isaac McFarlin, Jr., of the University of Texas at Dallas and the National Poverty Center, and Francisco (Paco) Martorell of the RAND Corporation studied state data on student success in Texas and found no evidence that developmental education improved degree attainment. They also found that students who had taken developmental courses and earned a degree took no longer than their peers to do so.
- A third study, also conducted by Bridget Terry Long in collaboration with Eric P. Bettinger of Case Western Reserve University, tracked 28,000 students in Ohio and yielded different conclusions. Among students in this sample, those placed in developmental education were

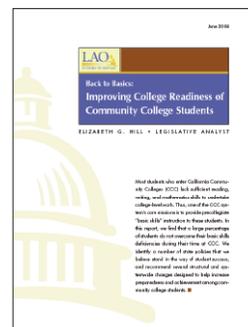
more likely to persist and graduate than academically comparable peers placed directly into college-level coursework. The authors believe that these results may be due to a more limited sample, which used only traditional-age, full-time students who had either already attended or planned to attend a four-year institution.

http://chronicle.com/weekly/v54/i43/43a01801.htm?utm_source=cc_medium=en

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=621>

Report Calls for Developmental Education Reform in California Community Colleges

The California’s Legislative Analyst’s Office has released *Back to Basics: Improving College Readiness of Community College Students*, calling for system-



level reform in the delivery of developmental education. Most students enrolling in developmental education in California’s community colleges are not progressing to college-level coursework, the report finds. Its authors point to the insufficiency of institutional reform in the absence or systemic changes. They highlight several areas for high-impact policy changes, including requiring enrollment in developmental education in the first semester and reexamining whether a policy requiring half of colleges’ operating budgets to be spent on classroom instruction restricts their ability to offer counseling and advisement to students.

www.lao.ca.gov/laoapp/PubDetails.aspx?id=1847

Pell Institute Highlights Challenges Facing Low-Income, First-Generation Students

Low-income, first-generation students are far less likely than their peers to reach educational outcomes, including transferring to a four-year institution and earning a degree, according to data

recently made public by the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education. The findings were unveiled at Student Financial Aid Research Network Conference in June 2008. When compared to students who are neither from low-income families nor first generation, this population is less than half as likely to transfer from a two-year to a four-year institution and one-fifth as likely to earn a Bachelor's degree within six years. These diminished outcomes persist despite the fact that nearly two-thirds of low-income, first-generation students want to earn a Bachelor's degree. Among students attending public two-year institutions, half who are either low-income, first-generation, or both were not enrolled after six years, compared to one-third of those who were neither from low-income families nor first-generation college-goers.

www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/06/16/first

www.pellinstitute.org

Federal Committee Reports on *Transition Matters*

Transition Matters, an extensive report on the outcomes of the May 2008 proceedings of the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, focuses on the frequency with which students transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions and the obstacles to their continuous enrollment and transfer. The committee, which is charged with making recommendations directly to the Secretary of Education and Congress, groups testimony and recommendations in three categories: enrollment, persistence, and transfer to four-year schools. Several Achieving the Dream partner organizations and colleges presented at the day-long meeting, including the Community College Research Center, MDRC, Jobs for the Future, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Valencia Community College (FL), and Northern Virginia Community College. www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/lacsfa/tran-smattfullrpt.pdf

Kentucky Initiative Helps Working Adults Complete Their Education

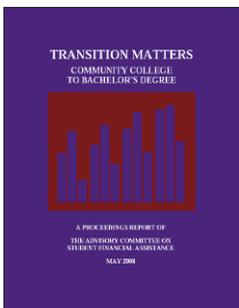
Kentucky has adopted a strategy aimed at helping working adults with college credit complete their Bachelor's degrees. In November 2007, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education started Project Graduate, a response to the reported 300,000 Kentuckians, ages 25-50, who have credits from one of the state's public institutions but no degree, including 11,000 who have earned more than 90 credits. Campus advocates help participating adult students navigate administrative processes, such as admissions and financial aid, and facilitate course transfer and online learning in order to ease the burden of returning to school. At less than a year old, Project Graduate has already expanded to all eight of the state's public universities and ten private colleges and will serve more than two hundred students this summer and fall.

www.courier-journal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080623/news0105/806230393/1008/news01

Transfer and Alignment

Recent European Reforms in Transfer and Alignment Provide Valuable Lessons

In February, *Inside Higher Ed's* audio conference, "Global Shifts in Higher Ed—Why Bologna Matters to Your College," featured Cliff Adelman, senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy and author of the forthcoming report, *The Bologna Club: What U.S. Higher Education Can Learn from a Decade of European Reconstruction*. The Bologna Process (so named since the agreement was launched in Bologna, Italy) is the platform upon which European Union member countries have come together to align their higher education systems. Forty-six countries have agreed on systems and procedures for "harmonizing" their degree cycles and accountability structures in order to improve the mobility of students and workers across countries. The audio conference provided an overview of the process and its potentially significant implications for American higher





education. Copies of the audio conference can be purchased from *Inside Higher Ed*. www.insidehighered.com/audioconference

Report Recommends Aligning Non-Credit Education in Community Colleges

The Landscape of Noncredit Workforce Education: State Policies and Community College Practices, a report by the Community College Research Center, provides detailed findings on state policies and community college practices from case studies of 20 community colleges in 10 states. The authors conclude that noncredit workforce education in community colleges serves multiple roles and often falls outside the bounds of academic regulation and accountability structures. Thus, the degree to which such programs are integrated into the college’s overall structure has important implications for outcomes. The report recommends: providing state funding with targeted goals to promote workforce development; articulating noncredit and credit programs to promote student transfer and career pathways; developing forms of validation for noncredit workforce education; and implementing standard systems to collect outcomes data. ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=572

Adult and Workforce Education

Indiana Initiative Highlights the Power of College Credits in Workplace Training

In April the W.E. Upjohn Institute’s *Employment Research Newsletter* featured “Lessons Learned from a Workplace Literacy Initiative,” by Kevin Hollenbeck and Bridget Timmeney. The report details findings from Indiana’s 21st Century Workplace Skills Initiative, a set of 10 workplace education projects funded by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. The authors found that earning college credits was a powerful motivator for mid-career adult learners. They also stressed the importance of instructional flexibility and noted that employers were more motivated by improving workplace morale and

perceived productivity than by quantifiable returns on investment. Two key features were identified among the most successful initiatives: the presence of a “program champion” with some level of workplace authority; and the willingness to compensate employees for time spent in training.

www.upjohninst.org/publications/empres.html

Financial Aid

Community Colleges Reluctant to Offer Federal Loans

Denied: Community College Students Lack Access to Affordable Loans, an issue brief from the Project on Student Debt, draws attention to the high number of community college students who do not have access to federal student loan programs. Many community colleges elect not to participate in federal loan programs in order to avoid high student default rates, which might jeopardize other lending options.

However, the report contends, a lack of participation in federal loan programs drives students toward private lenders, credit card debt, and, in some cases, a decision not to enroll. Additionally, the authors point to evidence that this strategy contributes to uneven access to low-interest borrowing options across racial and ethnic groups. The Project on Student Debt calls for community colleges to reconsider this decision and for the U.S. Department of Education to take steps to facilitate their participation, including advertising successful appeals of published cohort default rates and publishing information about the frequency of student participation in federal loan programs by institution.

<http://projectonstudentdebt.org/files/pub/denied.pdf>

