

JANUARY 2007

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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 2007. Achieving the Dream continues to grow. Washington and Pennsylvania have joined the initiative, bringing the total to nine states and fifty-eight colleges. The initiative is considering applications from additional states to join later this year.

This issue contains:

- A look back at the priorities and accomplishments of Achieving the Dream state policy teams for the year ending September 30, 2006;
- A report on how Achieving the Dream is addressing opportunities to work with regional accreditation agencies on how they can help colleges using data to drive student success and learning—an increasingly timely issue in light of the Spellings Commission's focus on accreditation reform; and

- A Q&A with two Virginia community college and higher education leaders on how that state is strengthening its data systems and placing a higher priority on improving student success.

We also provide our usual updates from Achieving the Dream states—policy activities, convenings, publications—and links to relevant resources. This issue highlights many publications from Achieving the Dream partner organizations.

Thanks to many of you, our audience for this newsletter is growing: circulation has more than doubled in the past six months. *If you know anyone who should receive this newsletter, please email our editor, Radha Roy Biswas at rrbiswas@jff.org.*

ACHIEVING THE DREAM STATES:

Progress Reports, 2005–2006

Round I and II Achieving the Dream states recently completed summary reports on their policy development activities during the past year. There is significant convergence in the top priorities targeted by the states and some important opportunities for collective learning and collaboration in the year ahead.

The states concentrated their efforts in five broad areas:

- Clear public policy commitment;
- Data-driven accountability systems;
- Cross-system alignment, with particular emphasis on alignment with K-12 education;

- Incentives for improved services to academically underprepared students, with particular emphasis on developmental education; and
- Financial aid policies, particularly increased need-based aid for low-income students.

Most policy changes that were effected were administrative and rule changes, rather than through legislation. However, several states secured legislative victories that may have a significant impact on community college efforts to increase student retention, completion, and learning.

Here are some highlights:

Connecticut: Began development of institutional research “data mart” to simplify Achieving the Dream data sets, allow expanded longitudinal tracking, and simplify analysis of relationships of student characteristics to success outcomes; developed recommendations to secure dedicated funding to strengthen and expand student support services—included in the Community College System Board’s budget expansion recommendations to the State Office of Policy Management.

Florida: Ongoing use of state’s student database to conduct studies on student success, e.g., Student Life Skills course and Developmental education; Valencia Community College now mandates a Student Life Skills course for all students, based on the state system’s research.

New Mexico: Piloted student success indicators in anticipation of state performance funding and pilot indicators were accepted as approved measures; successfully advocated for funding of College Affordability Act, funded at \$49 million.

North Carolina: Achieving the Dream-related success and persistence goals for underrepresented students now form one of nine system priorities; two-year study of placement scores validated the establishment of a uniform placement cut score for all colleges for COMPASS and Accuplacer, being rolled out in 2007.

Texas: Facilitated the development of new state-level community college accountability measures, particularly one that tracks student progression through developmental education (the percentage of developmental education students who complete a college-level course), which was one of the indicators that the Achieving the Dream state data project has been testing; worked with the community college formula advisory committee, culminating in a recommendation for a developmental education cost study and the development of funding models that would not penalize institutions for successfully accelerating students.

Virginia: State-level participation on P-16 Council, which culminated in subcommittee recommendation to facilitate P-16 data sharing, address FERPA issues, and continue implementing Data Quality Campaign essential elements; partnered with student advocacy group, Virginia 21, to support Chancellor’s Scholarship to supplement the difference between community college and university tuition—legislation failed, but will be reintroduced this year.

A matrix summarizing the various policy efforts and successes of these states in the school year 2005-06 can be downloaded at www.achievingthedream.org/publicpolicy/default.tp.

STATE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

What’s New in Achieving the Dream States

CONNECTICUT

Financial Aid Package Proposed for Women with Children: The Connecticut Community College System is advocating for a new financial aid initiative for adult learners, especially women with children. Its Office of Planning and Management is proposing a financial aid package that would include a stipend for room and board, in addition to tuition and fees, just as with aid packages for residential students in four-year schools. The initiative was launched to promote greater

persistence among low-income working women. It will be piloted in three colleges. Eligibility will be limited to enrollees in occupational programs. The proposal has been submitted in the Higher Education Committee Budget to the Governor.

Achieving the Dream in Chancellor’s Message: In September, the Chancellor’s “Back to Campus” message, delivered to staff throughout the system, focused on supporting student success and the role of community colleges, their faculty, and staff

in reducing barriers and encouraging achievement and persistence. The goals of Achieving the Dream, including the development of a culture of inquiry, were highlighted, along with success initiatives underway at all twelve of the state's Achieving the Dream community colleges.

FLORIDA

Chancellor Uses Data Bulletins to Stimulate

Presidents' Discussions: One of the themes for Achieving the Dream is using data and evidence to inform decisions. Chancellor David Armstrong recently launched a new data series called "Fast Facts Student Success Series." These informational bulletins, which compare performance across the state's community colleges on different issues, are distributed to the Council of Presidents at its monthly meetings to stimulate discussion on strategies for improvement. The reports consist of bulleted highlights followed by institution-level data and a description of how the institutions can recreate this data on their own. *Bulletins are then posted at www.fldoe.org/cc/OSAS/FastFacts/FastFacts.asp.*

NEW MEXICO

Department of Higher Education Takes Achieving the

Dream Lead: Last summer, an internal division in the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges slowed Achieving the Dream activities at the state level. In December, the New Mexico Department of Higher Education, under the leadership of Secretary Beverlee McClure, became the lead organization in New Mexico for Achieving the Dream's policy work. Achieving the Dream will help strengthen the department's activities on issues related to alignment with K-12 on standards, improvements in developmental education, and other priorities, and it will connect the department to related efforts in other states. The staff lead for the effort will be Tanya Garcia, a New Mexico native returning to the state from American University.

NORTH CAROLINA

New Placement Test Cut Score Policy Goes into

Effect: The State Board of Community Colleges took action to finalize the new policy requiring all 58 community colleges to

use the same placement scores for admitting and placing students into the college. The uniform, statewide placement scores for Accuplacer and COMPASS were established after a two-year validation study. The new policy takes effect for fall registration 2007.

Tobacco Settlement Augments Need-based Aid:

North Carolina's tobacco settlement foundation has awarded the North Carolina Community College System \$500,000 to be used for need based scholarships for students in tobacco dependent counties or those counties declared "economically distressed."

Legislature Funds a System Level Financial Aid

Position: NCCCS has created a system-level Financial Aid position in the Division of Academic and Student Services. Monty Hickman, formerly of Bennett College, will provide technical assistance to colleges and will serve as the primary point of contact about strategies to improve access to and uptake of financial aid.

Collaboration Across Higher Education Sectors

Advances: Senior staff from the North Carolina Community College System and the Office of the President, University of North Carolina, continue to meet every six weeks on issues of mutual interest, an outgrowth of meetings between President Martin Lancaster of the NCCCS and Erskine Bowles, President of the UNC System. The two presidents appeared together at the 2006 North Carolina Community College System Conference in October, attended by nearly 3000 faculty, staff, presidents, trustees and students. Achieving the Dream colleges and their efforts were featured prominently in workshops and panel appearances at the conference, which is held very two years.

OHIO

Departure and Best Wishes: Barbara Endel of KnowledgeWorks Foundation, a key member of Ohio's Achieving the Dream policy team, is joining the New York City-based Workforce Strategy Center as a senior associate. At the foundation, Barbara led a statewide advocacy effort to align Ohio's workforce education institutions with economic development goals, organizing key stakeholders and successfully arguing for creation of a governor-directed, statewide task force to examine how to create a

seamless system of postsecondary education. We wish Barbara the very best in her new endeavor.

Ohio Achieving the Dream Policy Agenda: In October, the Ohio Achieving the Dream team drafted a policy agenda. It focuses on strengthening relationships and formal partnerships with state initiatives to improve K-12 public school innovation and quality, developing policy recommendations to improve the delivery of developmental and remedial education, and improving upon Ohio's data system to provide institutions with cross-sector data analysis to encourage alignment and accountability.

KnowledgeWorks Foundation Support for Governor's Transition Team: Governor-elect Ted Strickland has appointed KnowledgeWorks President and CEO Chad Wick to a key position on his transition team, tapping him to help inform the team's work on K-12 and higher education policies. He also leads a team that is evaluating the budget, regulations, and performance of the Ohio Board of Regents, Tuition Trust Authority, and Higher Education Facilities Commission. KnowledgeWorks staff are working with stakeholders in each of the three organizations to identify major issues, significant challenges, and strategic objectives, and to provide guidance for major budget issues, regulations, and interagency projects.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania, a new entrant into Achieving the Dream, held the first meeting of its core team in November. Core Team members include the Secretary of Education, Jerry Zahorchak, as well as representatives of the business community, the K-12 system, and the state student loan agency. In December, a meeting of teams from each of the seven participating colleges provided the first opportunity to talk about initial data findings at each institution and their focus for the year ahead. The partners have engaged the Education Policy Leadership Center to assist with a policy inventory, and this work is well underway. A meeting of the larger Advisory Council is planned for early 2007, as well as the beginning of preliminary briefings with key policymakers.

TEXAS

A New Compact for Community Colleges: The Texas Community College Association has generated *The New Community College Compact with Texas*, which announces the commitment of Texas community colleges to addressing declining enrollment and graduation rates and specifies how the state can help community colleges fulfill their mission. Among the compact's most important proposals: a design for a new funding system that includes incentive funding for innovation and outcomes in colleges that reduce or close achievement gaps for underserved groups; and keeping tuition and costs low in order to increase access. *See: www.tacc.org/pdf/newcompact111006.pdf.*

VIRGINIA

Research into Placement Testing: The Virginia Community College System, through a grant from the National Governors Association, has begun research on developmental education students. First, the system is identifying the COMPASS placement test cut scores for all 23 colleges. Then, the study will examine how students are placed in English and mathematics courses, as well as how academic performance is tracked through developmental education into college-level English and mathematics courses. The next step will be to examine the performance of developmental education students compared to the non-developmental education students in entry-level English and mathematics courses. The report will be ready in April.

Transfer Scholarship Legislation to be Reintroduced: Virginia Senate Majority Leader Walter A. Stosch (R-Henrico) and House Appropriations Committee Chairman Vincent F. Callahan, Jr. (R-Fairfax) will be sponsoring legislation in the 2007 General Assembly Session to create the Virginia Community College Transfer Grant Program. The legislation is intended to address the dual challenges of accessibility and affordability that confront Virginia students and their families in the pursuit of the four-year degree. If enacted, the legislation would provide higher education grants to Virginia residents who have successfully completed an acceptable Associate's degree program at a Virginia community college under the new

dual enrollment program and have been admitted to an accredited nonprofit public or private institution of higher education in the Commonwealth.

WASHINGTON

Washington's First Statewide Achieving the Dream

Meeting: Members of Washington State Achieving the Dream core team, along with representatives of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, had their first state-level meeting in December. In attendance were all six of the state's Achieving the Dream colleges: Big Bend Community College, Highline Community College, Renton Technical College, Seattle Central Community College, Tacoma Community College and Yakima Community College. College teams a chance to assess their progress, improve their understanding of what other Washington state colleges are doing, and help the state board identify how it can be of assistance. The board updated the colleges on its priorities. The board also presented a system-level overview, college-specific data on the socio-

economic study of community college students, and an assessment of pre-college course-taking of recent high school graduates.

Washington Transitions Math Project Enters

Implementation Phase: This project aims to reduce math remediation required by Washington high school seniors. A collaborative, statewide initiative involving a partnership of educators, students, parents, and local leaders, it recently published college readiness standards for math that define the core knowledge and skills expected of students entering college-level courses in mathematics and other courses with quantitative components. With the publication of the standards, the project moves into its second phase, implementation, with a focus on building the capacity of teachers and schools to address the challenge of helping all students achieve college readiness in math. *The handbook of standards and other information on the project can be found at www.transitionmathproject.org/events/2006/summer_institute_2006_partners.asp.*

INTERVIEW

Aligning Virginia's Efforts to Promote Community College Student Success



Monty Sullivan



Tod Massa

Monty Sullivan, Vice Chancellor for Academic Services and Research for the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), and **Tod Massa**, Director of Policy Research and Data Warehousing with the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV), are key members of Virginia's Achieving the Dream state team, led by the Virginia Community College System.

We spoke with both of them about what the state is trying to do to improve its data systems and create incentives for greater institutional attention to student outcomes. Sullivan and Massa also spoke about how involvement in Achieving the Dream helps support these efforts, particularly in areas of state data systems alignment and transfer and interagency collaboration.

Why did Virginia decide to participate in Achieving the Dream?

Monty Sullivan: We saw an opportunity to work with a group of states with similar interests and concerns in a data-based way—and to learn from what they were doing. We have been concerned with student success, but Achieving the Dream has given us a way to use data to drive our decisions—to do it the right way.

The initiative has also helped strengthen the policy direction of Dateline '09—the Chancellor's strategic plan for the system. Dateline '09 was the Chancellor's vision, and Achieving the Dream has given it stronger legs and made it more practical and focused, so its measurable goals can be operationalized in college priorities and strategies.

Measurable goals in Dateline '09 put some pressure on the institutions, and Achieving the Dream is a key vehicle for helping us achieve Dateline '09 goals.

Each May, institutions set goals for Dateline '09, and each college president is evaluated the following May on those goals. We compile the information and verify it with their institutional research officers for accuracy, and those data are used for evaluations. We post the data on the system Web site for the presidents and public to see. The college metrics serve both for internal evaluation and public accountability.

There is a 1:1 correlation between Dateline '09 and Achieving the Dream. The Dateline vision put Virginia further down the road than many states, because it has measurable goals. We in systems and colleges are used to non-binding, generalized statements, rather than measurable goals. But measurable goals in Dateline '09 put some pressure on the institutions, and Achieving the Dream is a key vehicle for helping us achieve Dateline '09 goals.

What is the perspective of Virginia and the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia on how the state can help support student success? Where you are right now and where you are going?

Tod Massa: Historically, SCHEV has not been very involved in student success. It has been a coordinating body, with power of recommendations as opposed to regulations. For decades, SCHEV has been mainly focused on how dollars get spent, and how they should get spent, instead of on student learning outcomes.

We've made a shift at SCHEV, at the staff and board levels. Now we ask: How can we use data to focus on student success? How can state data be useful to students, the state, and employers? We don't have a one-size-fits-all system. We have 23 community colleges, 40 campuses, and 15 public four-year institutions, from small military institutions to very large research institutions. SCHEV's view is evolving to: What outcomes do we value most and what can lead us to these outcomes? Achieving the Dream is consistent with and supports this shift.

But for the first time in 400 years, Virginia has created measurable state goals for higher education and what it wants out of them. When our students leave college, can those who earned a credential engage competently in oral communication, written communication, quantitative and qualitative

reasoning, scientific reasoning, critical thinking, and information literacy? These are the six core competencies established by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission in 1999. We now ask: Are students mastering those?

There has been a lot of movement in Virginia to beef up the state data system to do new kinds of data analyses. What progress is being made—and how do SCHEV and the Virginia Community College System interact around data system development?

Sullivan: I'll talk about the relationship between SCHEV and VCCS first. We have not pursued it as closely as we should: in fact, our closest working interactions have been through Achieving the Dream meetings. It is a shame that it takes a national project to get two guys who work in the same building to talk more to one another.

With SCHEV, we are focusing intensely on the data system—we are moving away from a 23-college system to a single enterprise platform for our data. At this point, we literally have pieces of paper following students around, and sometimes all that faculty have are hard copies. That does not encourage faculty to use data. We are trying to make data more readily available to faculty. We're making COMPASS scores part of the data system to help faculty follow where students started and where they ended. They'll be able to answer questions like: How did students who placed in Level 1 Development Math do finally? If we get their buy in, faculty will be able to use our data to improve student learning.

Massa: We are designing and developing a few data analysis tools that will both be immediately useful to community colleges and also change the discussion of how we define successful outcomes. It is very powerful to use data tools with colleges to explore answers to questions about their students and what happens to them. The same data is available to the systems office and to individual colleges, so we can all look at the data.

We want to use the tools to discuss students' prospects for transfer or what happened to them after they transferred up till six years. For instance, does it make sense for student to transfer to a larger institution? One of the tools can track a cohort that transferred to

One of the most important ways for community colleges to assess college readiness is to provide direct feedback and information to high schools about remediation.

four-year institutions. Another is like a transfer matrix, with the twenty-three colleges on one side and the four-year public and private institutions along the top. You can click on a college and find out: Who are the transfer students? Where are they going, in both the public and private sectors? How many transfer with degrees and how many without? How many graduate? How many are still enrolled?

At the end of the day, what really matters is improving student outcomes. Whether it's improving accessibility by helping people understand the importance of properly funding higher education, or improving what goes on in classrooms or increasing student services, at the end of the day we need to change student outcomes. We sometimes lose sight of that.

Where do you stand now in your ability to connect K-12 and postsecondary data systems?

Massa: I might say that we are beset by the agents of chaos. While SCHEV has legal authority to require some data transfer now through language in the state Appropriations Act, the state department of education is balking at that, and the attorney general's office has issues—they don't think we should be sharing data on this scale. It will eventually happen, but it will be challenging. This is somewhat absurd, given that we are working to draft guidelines to get information from every college on every new student for the Virginia state police to match against a state and national crime information system. We have to change the way we think about sharing data.

Virginia recently received a National Governors Association grant for policies to improve alignment between K-12 and higher education. Can you tell us about that effort?

Massa: One of the most important ways for community colleges to assess college readiness is to provide direct feedback and information to high schools about remediation. Students need remedial education in reading, writing, or math. High schools need to know who these students are and what they need. And that is what we are testing with the NGA grant.

Higher education in Virginia is guided by the six core competencies I mentioned above,

established in 1999. But a number of these, such as reasoning and communication, are not part of K-12 standards or assessments. We need to align what we are expecting out of and measuring in the K-12 system and the undergraduate system. The state P-16 Council (which may or may not be continued by the new governor) is wrestling with the fact that we have fairly straightforward measures for higher education, but the sector that is responsible for preparing everyone to college-readiness level is not being measured by the same criteria. We need to look at this alignment.

Sullivan: There are a number of student readiness and alignment issues for us to deal with. Some data are available but not the full picture. Our colleges are all over the map about how they deal with different levels of student preparedness. Our COMPASS placement scores are not set across the system—and we need to get colleges to deal with that, to use data rather than some longstanding tradition to place students in a particular course. But these changes are not done easily; they take time.

What have been some benefits of participating in Achieving the Dream?

Massa: We are grateful to have conversations with the system. And Achieving the Dream gives me a chance to better advocate for issues facing VCCS in data and accountability. It provides a platform to forward the goals of providing data to colleges to improve outcomes. In two to three years, I'd like to be able to point to some clear and compelling evidence about transformation in students' progress.

Sullivan: At the Chancellor's Retreat this summer, the opportunities that Achieving the Dream provides crystallized for some of the college presidents. It became clear from the progress of the five Achieving the Dream colleges that these institutions are laboratories for us to get a sense of what impacts student success on the ground, so that we are not always at the 5,000-foot, systems-level view. We have a better understanding of what works on campuses and in classrooms: which policies are effective, which are not. And then we want to know, how can we spread the lab effect across the system?

Regional Accreditation and Student Success

Accreditation policy, particularly around promoting student persistence, completion, and learning outcomes, can provide a critical lever for the long-term institutionalization of Achieving the Dream goals. Recent revisions in accreditation standards to make student success more central to the accreditation process, coupled with increased political attention to the role of accreditation in driving improvements in educational quality and student success, have brought this issue to the fore for Achieving the Dream colleges and states and for the initiative in general.

Achieving the Dream has been busy exploring opportunities to strengthen relations with regional accreditors that are working on these issues.

In July, leaders from several Achieving the Dream colleges and partner organizations met with the CEOs of six regional accrediting agencies in a meeting co-sponsored by JFF and AACC. They discussed how the initiative can help as the regional bodies grapple with ways to provide more guidance to colleges regarding student persistence, completion, and learning outcomes. For the meeting, Radha Roy Biswas of JFF prepared *A Supporting Role: How Accreditors Can Help Promote the Success of Community College Students*. See www.jff.org or www.achievingthedream.org/publicpolicy/policybriefspubs/default.tp

A follow-up conversation in the fall led to a short list of two types of research and support activities that can connect Achieving the Dream's resources and experience with regional accreditation agencies around student success. The first is greater engagement of initiative leaders and partners in accreditor institutes and meetings. The second is a research project on learning outcomes and assessments used in English and math gatekeeper courses at Achieving the Dream colleges—and how colleges use assessment results to identify and target instructional improvements.

In early December, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings met with regional accreditation agency CEOs and others concerned with higher education outcomes to discuss ways to strengthen assessment of learning in higher education. Achieving the Dream was represented by Florida Community College Chancellor David Armstrong, Janet Laughlin, coordinator of the Student Success Center at Danville Community College, and Keith Brown, vice president of data and accountability in the North Carolina Community College System. Two national experts who set the stage for the meeting, Jane Wellman and Peter Ewell, are members of the Achieving the Dream Policy Advisory Group.

Participants generally agreed that:

- While efforts by accreditors to put greater emphasis on student learning is commendable, current efforts are not enough.
- While the diversity of institutional mission is to be respected, there needs to be some comparability and benchmarking around the definition of student learning outcomes among peer organizations.
- Colleges and accreditors both need better assessment tools and definitions to measure student success: in many respects, educational measurement and assessment is still in its infancy.
- More transparency in the accreditation process is critical.

Some differences surfaced as well, particularly on how best to improve assessments and benchmarks. Should accreditation agencies and higher education move toward national standards and benchmarks? Should third parties be engaged to help professionalize institutional assessment? What promising models for institutional assessment and benchmarking of student learning can inform accreditors' efforts?

Given the interest in more information on how accreditation processes can help drive improvements in student outcomes and learning, Achieving the Dream is embarking on a new research project. We will look across the initiative's 58 colleges to answer three questions: What learning outcomes are specified in key gatekeeper courses (e.g., first college-level math and English courses)?

How is student learning assessed? How are the results of those assessments used for institutional improvement?

In the coming year, we also plan to continue disseminating Achieving the Dream lessons and tools among the regional accrediting bodies.

Resources from Achieving the Dream Partners

Updates to the Achieving the Dream Web site

Visitors to the public policy section of the Achieving the Dream Web site will find a number of changes. The Web pages for individual states have a new format. State profiles for Ohio and Pennsylvania are now available. New state information has been added, including the Community College Research Center's policy audits for Connecticut and Ohio.

The Ohio state audit can be accessed at www.achievingthedream.org/publicpolicy/achievingthedreamstates/ohio.tp. The Connecticut state audit can be accessed at www.achievingthedream.org/publicpolicy/achievingthedreamstates/connecticut.tp.

State Audit Findings Summarized in *Community College Journal*

Since the launch of Achieving the Dream, Kevin Dougherty and others from the Community College Research Center at Teachers College at Columbia University have undertaken audits for the first seven Achieving the Dream states on their policies around community college access, success, and accountability. Kevin's article in the October/November 2006 *Community College Journal*, "Helping Students Enter and Succeed: Access, Success, and Accountability Policies in the Achieving The Dream States," highlights their findings and makes several recommendations around access and success policies.

Online subscribers of the Community College Journal can read this article at: www.aaccarchives.org

Community College Survey of Student Engagement Releases Report on Community College Quality and Performance

A new national report from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement shines a light on the quality and performance of community colleges. While concluding that there is room for substantial

improvement in a number of areas, the report also provides numerous examples of community colleges that use data about effective educational practices to strengthen programs, services, and facilities for students. The report, *Act on Fact: Using Data to Improve Student Success*, provides national results of the student engagement survey and profiles colleges that are using survey results as a tool for better understanding students' experiences, identifying areas of college performance that need improvement (particularly academic planning and advising), taking concerted action, and then monitoring the effects of their intervention.

See: www.ccsse.org/publications/publications.cfm

TRUCCS Findings on Retention and Transfer of Community College Students

Traveling Successfully on the Community College Pathway presents the research and findings of the Transfer and Retention of Urban Community College Students Project, which looks at relevant factors and policies in the Los Angeles Community College District. Dr. Linda Hagedorn, Achieving the Dream partner and director of the Community College Program at the University of Florida, led the project. The report addresses two of the most vexing measurement issues in higher education research: how to obtain true transfer rates from community colleges to four-year universities, and the correct formula for measuring college student retention. Although the project focused on students in Los Angeles, many findings are broadly relevant.

See: www.coe.ufl.edu/Leadership/ihe/TRUCCS/Files/TRUCCS_Booklet_2006.pdf

CCRC on Age and Remediation: Different Outcomes for Different Age Groups

Stepping Stones to a Degree: The Impact of Enrollment Pathways and Milestones on Older Community College Student Outcomes, a new

report from the Community College Research Center, looks at the outcomes for remedial education among older and younger students. It also compares the impact of enrollment pathways (such as remediation) and enrollment milestones (such as attaining a certain number of credits) on the two groups. Older students who enroll in remedial courses—particularly in math—are “less negatively” affected in terms

of time to program completion than were younger students who also took the courses. Traditional students who take remedial courses at a two-year college are likely to need more motivation than adult students, who tend to see remediation as a brush up.

For a brief version of this paper, go to <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=449>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Data Quality Campaign Celebrates 1st Anniversary

The Data Quality Campaign released a one-year progress report, *Maximizing the Power of Education Data While Ensuring Compliance with Federal Student Privacy Laws: A Guide for State Policymakers*. Over the past year, the DQC, a national partnership to improve the quality, accessibility, and use of data in education, has highlighted the power of developing and using longitudinal data systems as a key tool for improving student achievement. The report highlights state progress in building longitudinal data systems:

- Forty-two states have a unique student identifier in place.
- Nine states have eight or nine of the ten essential elements the DQC has identified as necessary building blocks for a longitudinal data system.
- Thirty-six states have put in place an audit system to ensure quality data
- Twenty-six states indicate they have or are working on building data warehouses.
- Twenty-eight states have some form of Web-based data and analysis tools available for local educators.

See: www.dataqualitycampaign.org

Promoting Student Success In Community Colleges by Increasing Support Services

A new policy brief by Brandon Roberts and Deborah Povich of the Working Poor Families Project discusses the role states can play in improving student retention and completion by helping institutions strengthen student support services. The brief outlines three broad areas of student support services—academic supports, personal guidance, and supplemental supports, such as child care and transportation. It also describes initiatives and programs in states as diverse as California, Colorado, Illinois,

Ohio, Texas, and Washington that are exploring ways to address this issue. The Working Poor Families Project, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, supports the efforts of state nonprofit organizations to strengthen state policies that can help low-income working families achieve economic success and security.

See www.aecf.org/lists/fes/nov06/wpfp_policybrief_fall06.pdf

College Board Report Reaffirms Value of Higher Education

The College Board’s second update to its 2004 publication, *Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society*, reaffirms the earnings premium associated with higher education and the ways in which an educated population strengthens society. This 2006 supplement includes information on: differences in earnings by education level over time and across age groups; the variation in earnings among people with similar levels of education; unemployment rates by education level in individual states; the benefits of an educated workforce for economic growth; and some of the positive characteristics of parent–child interactions associated with level of education. The report includes disaggregated data on college enrollment—by gender, race and ethnicity, types of institutions attended by first-year college, and more.

See: www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/press/cost06/education_pays_06.pdf

Data on Higher Education Pipeline by Income Makes Case for Need-based Aid

Tom Mortenson, editor of *Postsecondary Opportunity*, has created a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation on the education pipeline. The data report, presented by income quartile, looks at high school graduation, college continuation, Bachelor’s degree completion, and education

attainment. The data is disaggregated by gender and race. Not surprisingly, on all four indicators, students from the top quartile outperform those in the bottom two quartiles. Just as disturbing, while all four quartiles showed some improvement on these indicators from 1970 to 2000, the trend seems to have reversed after 2001 for the lower two quartiles, and most sharply for the bottom quartile. The report also has data on financial aid trends and recommends increasing state and federal need-based financial aid.

See: www.postsecondary.org/archives/Presentations/PDF/Research&FederalPolicyIAConf101206.pdf

National Conference of State Legislators Proposes State Higher Education Roles

Transforming Higher Education: National Imperative–State Responsibility, a new report from the National Conference of State Legislators funded by Lumina Foundation for Education, urges state legislators to take up the national imperative for higher education reform. Echoing other recent reports, NCSL calls for a clear, state-led effort to address higher education challenges. The recommen-

dations range from goal-setting in higher education, to financial aid changes, to alignment strategies.

Purchase online at: www.ncsl.org/bookstore/productDetail.htm?prodid=013160

Education Commission of the States 50-state Database on Alignment

ECS has created a new 50-state database that identifies whether states set statewide college admission requirements, and it provides 50-state policy information on the alignment of state high school graduation requirements with state-set college admission requirements in English, math, social studies, science, and foreign language. ECS gathered the information in this database from statutes, regulations, and higher education coordinating board policy documents and Web sites. Research was conducted in 2005 and early 2006 and will be updated as new policies are enacted.

See: www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/HighSchool/highschoolb1_intro.asp?topic=hsc

Upcoming Events

New Mexico, January 22-24

Achieving the Dream State Policy Meeting and Strategy Institute, Albuquerque: This semi-annual meeting will bring together teams from all nine Achieving the Dream states. It will take place in conjunction with a Strategy Institute on best practices in student success, drawing on the experiences of all 58 Achieving the Dream colleges.

Virginia, March 22-25

Cooperative Learning Institute, Martinsville: Two Achieving the Dream colleges, Patrick Henry Community College in Virginia and Isothermal Community College in North Carolina, are jointly sponsoring a Cooperative Learning Institute in Martinsville, VA, in conjunction with the Cooperative Learning Center at the University of Minnesota. *For more information, contact: Carolyn Byrd, cbyrd@ph.vccs.edu.*

North Carolina, April 11-13

Minority Male Mentoring Conference, Raleigh: Dates for the third Minority Male Mentoring Conference have been set. The conference will be held at the Sheraton Imperial Conference Center. This year's event will be a partnership conference with the North Carolina Fatherhood Initiative. The 2006 Conference drew over 600 participants.

Florida, May 16-18

Developmental Education and Teaching Underrepresented Students, Fort Lauderdale: Florida will host the second annual *Connections* mini-conference, building on the success of last year's conference that reached teams from all 28 Florida community colleges. The theme this year is "Enhancing Current Student Success Strategies." *More information about the conference will be posted at www.fldoe.org/ccl/connections.*