ACHIEVING SUCCESS

ACHIEVING THE DREAM
COMMUNITY
COLLEGES
COUNT

JANUARY 2008

CONTENTS

In this Issue

Happy New Year to our readers and welcome to the January 2008 issue of *Achieving Success*. This issue features:

- A summary of the policy action plans for 2007-08 that have been generated by the Achieving the Dream state lead organizations to guide their efforts. Trends and patterns across the 15 states are highlighted.

- An interview with Marc Herzog, chancellor of Connecticut Community Colleges. Marc provides a chancellor-level view of the Connecticut system's efforts to support institutions as they seek to improve student success—and of the benefits of participating in Achieving the Dream.

- Updates on developments in two Achieving the Dream states that share a common origin in the unpredictability that moves certain policy issues to center stage: recent developments in North Carolina regarding the admission of undocumented students to the state's community colleges; and a new consensus in Texas around performance funding incentives for the state's community colleges.

- Links to resources that we hope you'll find useful.

Please help us expand the readership of *Achieving Success*. Send email addresses for new subscribers to our editor, Radha Roy Biswas, *rrbiswas@jff.org*. All subscriptions are free. We want to reach more readers in state offices and two-year institutions, and among researchers and policy organizations around the country.

State Action Plans for 2007–08: A Summary of Trends

In recent months, each of the 15 Achieving the Dream states has developed an action plan for the current program year. The lead organizations have also reported on activities and accomplishments during the last program year. That makes this a good time to reflect on the states' efforts, successes, and challenges as they promote and advance a student success agenda in state policy.

Achieving the Dream's state policy framework, generated by the participating state teams and the initiative's partner organizations, emphasizes five key priorities for state policy action to support and drive community college student success. These involve:

- Data and performance measurement systems;

- Incentives and support for student success (including developmental education);

- Alignment of K-12 and postsecondary expectations;

- Transfer and articulation (two-year to four-year); and

- Need-based financial aid.

Achieving the Dream states have been particularly active around policies related to data and performance measurement, as befits an initiative focused on improving the collection and use of longitudinal student data in order to improve student success.

The *Achieving the Dream Framework for Policy Change* can be downloaded from the ATD and JFF Web sites. See: *http://www.achievingthedream.org/publicpolicy/overview/default.tp.*

Achieving the Dream states have been particularly active around policies related to data and performance measurement, as befits an initiative focused on improving the collection and use of longitudinal student data in order to improve student success. Other areas of state progress include: performance incentives that reward student success; developmental education placement, provision, and financing; community college engagement in determination of college-readiness standards and preparation; and statewide transfer policies between two and four-year institutions. A few states have made need-based aid expansion a high priority for their Achieving the Dream efforts.

Several issues have gained new salience and priority during the past year. Foremost among these are efforts to: integrate intermediate measures of student success into accountability systems; increase institutional research capacity at the state and college levels; tie funding to college performance in helping students succeed, led by Washington State's innovative Student Achievement Initiative (see *Achieving Success, October 2007*); coordinate state policies around placement tests and cut scores with state efforts to specify college-readiness standards and assessments; and align adult basic skill instruction with developmental education and college-level instruction.

Participation in Achieving the Dream has accelerated learning among states and the adaptation of policy ideas from other states. Virginia is looking at Connecticut's centralization of financial aid administration for lessons that could help its students gain more access to federal aid dollars. Texas, Virginia, and Arkansas are among the states that are exploring performance-funding systems that would build on intermediate measures of success in addition to completion and transfer rates, akin to Washington State's "momentum points." In the coming year, the three Atlantic Coast states of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina plan to hold a

joint conference on promising practices in developmental education.

Some of the most exciting state commitments in support of community college student success are highlighted below.

Data and performance measurement: Michigan, Pennsylvania, and other states that have a decentralized higher education governance structure are working to establish the foundations of statewide longitudinal data systems for their community colleges. More typical are states that are working to strengthen data system integration across education sectors (e.g., Massachusetts, New Mexico) and states that are eager to deepen their capacity to collect and use data more effectively for improvement (e.g., Hawaii, North Carolina). A growing number of states are implementing, designing, or considering how to add intermediate measures of success— particularly for students who start college needing developmental coursework—into performance measurement, funding, and accountability systems. Some of these states explicitly link such efforts to their participation in the data definitional and benchmarking efforts of the Cross-State Data Work Group that now includes representatives of 7 of the 15 Achieving the Dream states.

Student success, including developmental education: Robust performance measurement systems make it possible to design and implement performance funding systems that reward student success. There is a long history of performance funding efforts in the U.S., not all of it encouraging (see Achieving the Dream brief, *State Systems of Performance Accountability for Community Colleges:* by Kevin J. Dougherty and Esther Hong). Recently, though, a new wave of interest in performance funding is evident. Washington State has taken the boldest steps in this direction with its newly launched Student Achievement Initiative. What makes Washington's effort particularly interesting is the emphasis on rewarding intermediate measures of success—"momentum points"— that focus colleges and students on key goals along the way, rather than just on the ultimate goals of completion and credentials.

As research demonstrates that those who start at the lowest levels of developmental education rarely persist to earn college credentials, there is a growing interest in rethinking the alignment between basic skills and developmental education courses and alternative routes to college-level work for significantly underprepared students.

In the past year, a number of states have revisited the question of statewide policies for determining placement into developmental education to maximize student success. North Carolina is in the first year of implementing its new statewide cut score policy. Connecticut is in the process of planning for a statewide policy, spurred by a legislative directive (see interview with Marc Herzog, chancellor of Connecticut Community Colleges). Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Virginia are reassessing their policies and exploring whether and how a statewide approach might benefit students. This emerging dialogue is challenging to community college systems and to college leaders—but is also creating opportunities to engage with K-12 and higher education colleagues in important systemic policy conversations.

A number of Achieving the Dream states have identified a relatively new area for research, planning and policy change: the relationship between adult basic education and both developmental education and college-level courses. As research demonstrates that those who start at the lowest levels of developmental education rarely persist to earn college credentials, there is a growing interest in rethinking the alignment between basic skills and developmental education courses and alternative routes to college-level work for significantly underprepared students, who are often working adults. Washington, North Carolina, Connecticut, and New Mexicvo are among the Achieving the Dream states that have identified ABE alignment as a priority for their efforts this year.

Alignment of K-12 and postsecondary standards: Across the nation, efforts to define college-readiness and adjust high school exit requirements to align with postsecondary expectations of college-readiness are gaining traction. In addition to developmental education assessment and placement policies, Achieving the Dream states are engaged in a range of K-12/postsecondary alignment activities. Florida is assessing whether its FCAT exam can serve as a test of college-readiness. Texas has recently published a set of college-readiness standards with assistance from David Conley of the Educational Policy Improvement Center in Oregon, as required by that state's alignment-focused H.B.1 legislation. A number of states—including Virginia, New Mexico, and Oklahoma—are using their participation in the American Diploma Project and its alignment institutes as a spur to clarifying gaps between high school exit and college placement requirements. Massachusetts is one of several states creating or updating feedback reports that they send to high schools summarizing how each high school's graduates perform in state colleges and universities.

Transfer and articulation: Several states are strengthening transfer and articulation between two- and four-year institutions and sectors. In Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, legislative action drives these priorities. The limited number of Achieving the Dream states pursuing policy changes in this area is likely due to a sense among state teams that the most critical challenges to student success come during the transition into college, progress through developmental courses, and success in first year credit courses. In the context of their Achieving the Dream goals, many states see transfer as something to be addressed "further down the road."

Need-based financial aid: Many Achieving the Dream states have swung away from need- toward merit-based aid in recent years; many state teams have therefore placed a priority for the coming year on increasing the availability of need-based aid. However, the states have targeted very different groups as the focus for efforts to expand need-based aid: adult learners in Washington and Oklahoma; transfer students in Connecticut and Virginia; native Hawaiian students in that state; and dual enrollment students in North Carolina.

To download detailed summaries of state priorities and action plans for this year, organized both by state and by policy area, go to the Achieving the Dream Web site Public Policy section.

Connecticut Community College Chancellor Reflects on Achieving the Dream Impact

Marc Herzog

We have seen a tremendous growth in the traditional student population coming to us directly from high school. As a result, completion of a degree or certificate program has become more important—to students and to our colleges.

Marc Herzog, Chancellor for the Connecticut Community College System, has a long history with his state's community colleges. He began his career as Director of Financial Aid at Tunxis Community College in Farmington in 1974. In 1993, he was selected to become Assistant Executive Director for the Connecticut Community College System, followed by his appointment three years later as Deputy Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer. He has served as Chancellor of the system since 1999.

Connecticut Community Colleges joined Achieving the Dream in the initiative's second year. Why did Connecticut decide to participate in this initiative?

Connecticut started out with a bit of an advantage. Because of my relationship with the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges, we started hearing about Achieving the Dream, particularly from leaders in the first five states. I felt that the student success goals and priorities of Achieving the Dream were where Connecticut needed to go. We had begun talking about student success within our system of 12 colleges, but we thought that aligning with a national initiative could really give us a boost. A number of college presidents were right there, too.

Being invited into Achieving the Dream through the process funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation was important for us. We were talking on the fringes about barriers to success and accountability for outcomes, and there had been some legislative discussions as well. But we hadn't really focused enough on student success or on our minority and low-income students, even though 60 percent of Pell Grant recipients in Connecticut attend our colleges. When Achieving the Dream was launched, we were eager to take part.

The annual grant that states get for participating in the initiative helps us focus and concentrate, but it's not so large that we worry about becoming dependent on it and then having to figure out how to replace the resources once they run out. In the end, it is the initiative's goals and philosophy of student success that drive us.

What is the perspective of Connecticut Community Colleges on the most effective ways to help support student success through policy change?

That is an interesting question. The definition of student success is still an evolving discussion in Connecticut, as our community colleges celebrate their fortieth year. In Connecticut, "student success" has traditionally been about whether students complete or succeed in a specific course. That is because for a long time, part-time adult students have formed the majority of our student body. Our definition of success came from part-time adult students in continuing education who needed specific skills and courses and certain sequence of courses to advance in the workplace (e.g., a criminal justice course for a student who wants to be police sergeant or a business accounting course for an insurance bookkeeper).

In the last few years, though, we have seen a tremendous growth in the traditional student population coming to us directly from high school. As a result, completion of a degree or certificate program has become more important—to students and to our colleges. Students' goals and expectations have changed, and we as a system are trying to keep up with that.

We are getting closer to a common, systemwide understanding of student success as about completion, but we are not there yet. We are closer to a common understanding of success as meeting the goals that students define for themselves; but we still need to put in place an accountability system that can guide students in establishing goals and developing plans to achieve those goals, and can track their progress.

We are recognizing the importance of creating a culture of evidence, of data integrity and quality data systems, of accountability and data-informed decisions at the institution and the state levels.

How would you characterize the progress of Connecticut's community colleges in the past three years in making student success a more central goal?

The most immediate impact of Achieving the Dream has been on the three participating college campuses. They are having the data-informed conversations that are critical to making progress. Their efforts have a spin-off effect for the nine other colleges in the state. Because we are a small state with relatively small colleges, the experience of the participating colleges can spread quickly to influence the state board, the legislature, and the other nine colleges.

Our starting point has been the push for greater transparency: what does student data actually tell us? We and our colleges are looking at data in new ways, looking at disaggregated and longitudinal data for the first time and asking tougher questions. As the analysis has been discussed on the three campuses and shared with the leadership of the other colleges, we are recognizing the importance of creating a culture of evidence, of data integrity and quality data systems, of accountability and data-informed decisions at the institution and the state levels.

Faculty at participating colleges have started looking at their data; many now have a better sense of how students are learning. For example, sitting with faculty members at Housatonic Community College, I saw faculty who could describe and discuss their students' success rates in developmental English composition—and the success of those students in gatekeeper college-level English courses.

Within the Council of Presidents, the three Achieving the Dream college presidents have been sharing their experiences about learning outcomes and the competencies that students need in order to transfer out or join the workforce. These colleges are bringing the principles and theory of Achieving the Dream to the leaders of the other institutions.

As a system, we are moving to expand our historical commitment to access by adding an explicit commitment to student success and how the system can support improved outcomes without sacrificing access. We are also working toward more powerful performance measures, transparency on student outcomes, and accountability systems.

It's not enough for the system office to embrace this change. Student success is now embedded in our strategic priorities. It has been endorsed by the Council of Presidents and the system's Board of Trustees are in discussion and are close to endorsing a final document. We have to get the message out to our faculty, our system staff, our Board, and state leaders.

How have you worked to publicize the success agenda and raise its centrality for faculty, administrators, and staff at the institutional level?

In our system, we have many councils and leadership groups, such as the Presidents Council, leadership groups for continuing education and workforce development, our academic deans, and so on. As is typical in higher education, each group has been focused on its particular responsibility. The system office is trying to provide an umbrella for thought and discussion around student success. The system office can help create and sustain a conversation about how to make the sum of the parts greater than the whole, and get all employees to focus on student success. This is about a cultural transformation: moving people from a discipline-based culture to routinely thinking about each individual's role in supporting and increasing student success—the academic instructors, student services staff, financial aid officers, etc.

Can you provide examples of specific policy initiatives that are designed to help strengthen colleges' performance?

Longitudinal data: While we may have very good term data, we do not yet have good longitudinal data, nor are we equipped to disaggregate student data adequately. So one of our priorities is to create a data management system for tracking longitudinal data, based on what was done for the three Achieving the Dream colleges. We want to replicate their data collection and reporting capability in all twelve colleges. We want to standardize the data elements and the format for reporting, for easy retrieval and comparison. We have been investing heavily in a technological solution for the system that is being piloted, with results expected in the spring.

> We package financial aid in a way that assumes that students will attend full time. Then, if they enroll for fewer than twelve credit hours, they see clearly what that decision means in terms of reduced financial aid.

Placement into developmental education: Another key policy issue for us is the assessment and placement of new students who need developmental education. Our colleges use the same exam but have different standards for placement.

We undertook a study with the Community College Research Center to look at the ACCUPLACER exam and its strengths and weaknesses for predicting success for our students. We learned a lot about deficiencies in our data collection across the 12 colleges. We found considerable variation in where colleges set their placement test cut scores. We have shared the CCRC report with several hundred English and math basic skills instructors and administrators; we asked them to look at the findings and then at the standards they use to define college-level work in their field.

The report will help us identify a systemwide cut score for use by all 12 colleges (a policy change that the legislature has asked us to develop this year). But we are aware that we need much more than a cut score on a test. We need to define carefully the learning outcomes necessary for college success, and then support a broad conversation among faculty and with student success staff about how to help students achieve those outcomes. Test scores must be placed in a broader context, combined with information on important indicators of likelihood of college success (e.g., courses taken, grades received).

To make this kind of policy change work, we have to listen carefully to colleges and their faculty. They need time to anticipate and plan for the implications of the policy change for curricula, course scheduling, faculty availability, etc. We need to make sure that the human capital is in place in each college; we need to give them time to put systems in place that can turn a statewide policy into effective institutional practice.

Connecticut has done interesting work around expanding financial aid access for low-income students? Can you tell us how and why the system took up this issue?

When we looked at our data, we found that we have a lot of academically underprepared students who face financial aid issues as well. We saw the need for more effective inter-

action with students and families at the institutional level, yet we also knew that institutional staff were overwhelmed with the technical and operational aspects of financial aid, causing them at times to shortchange the relationship with and counseling for students who need it most. We decided to reallocate our system investment in financial aid delivery, centralizing the administration in ways that have freed up college financial aid officers to work more effectively with students who need counseling (and about half our students receive some aid).

By improving financial aid administration and support, we have increased the number of students applying for aid, and we have increased the number of awards. Now we are focused on getting an even better understanding of financial barriers that affect student success. Are students working too much for their academic load? Can we help students achieve a better balance?

We are proud of one innovation in our financial aid policy. We package financial aid in a way that assumes that students will attend full time. Often, students don't know if they plan to attend full time; nor do they understand the financial aid implications of their enrollment status. So first we give them a sense of what their financial aid package would cover if they were enrolled full time. Then, if they enroll for fewer than twelve credit hours, they see clearly what that decision means in terms of reduced financial aid. We implemented this policy three years ago. We believe it is one of the factors contributing to an 88 percent increase in full-time enrollments during the last five years.

We have also worked on designing timely interventions to prevent the loss of financial aid due to insufficient academic progress. We have developed uniform, systemwide policies for institutional action to help students maintain their academic standing and avoid losing their financial aid.

Looking ahead a few years, what changes do you hope to see on your campuses? What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the state's community colleges and the system office in moving a student success agenda?

One hope is to institutionalize a better system of student services, assessment, and advising across our colleges. Another is that

Connecticut already has the highest achievement gap in the nation. The new demographics will widen this gap, unless we do something distinctly different.

the delivery of basic skills education will be stronger and that faculty will be better prepared to teach basic skills effectively.

I hope we also do a better job with those who come to us with GEDs or alternative diplomas. Although community colleges are not the providers of adult basic education in Connecticut, we need stronger, more effective partnerships with those providers, so that more lower-skill adults can succeed in our programs.

We will also have to change how we define student success: we need a common definition of it. And we need to be able to measure and benchmark our ability to deliver to our students.

Finally, I think alignment with both the K-12 and the baccalaureate sector will improve dramatically, and we will see significant changes in articulation between the sectors. What we need is a faculty-driven focus on student learning outcomes and a common vision of success across K-12, community colleges, four-year colleges, and business and industry.

What obstacles to achieving your goals are of greatest concern?

A key challenge is the changing demographics in Connecticut and New England. Community colleges are seeing changes in the mix of full- and part-time students, in the racial and ethnic diversity of students on campus. Connecticut already has the highest achievement gap in the nation. The new demographics will widen this gap, unless we do something distinctly different.

We are dependent on state funding to provide necessary services, since there is no local funding for community colleges in our state. With enrollments up, and also the demands and expectations of students and employers, more resources are needed, but we are at the mercy of state budgetary cycles and the next few years look tight.

I am also concerned about the aging of community college employees. In nursing and engineering technology, for example, it is increasingly difficult to find enough qualified people to replace long-time staff.

Our stakeholders in higher education and the legislature will need to understand and be supportive. We can't do it alone. But we must accept responsibility and accountability for our students' success if their support is to be adequate and sustained.

You Never Know What Might Happen… Reports from North Carolina and Texas

The path to policy change is often quite unpredictable, set in motion by political forces, legal actions, or coincidences of timing that only make sense in retrospect. This has been the case in both Texas and North Carolina in recent months. In Texas, a political battle between the governor and the community colleges over state payments for group health insurance has led to new energy around performance funding. In North Carolina, the case of an undocumented student who was initially refused enrollment in the community college component of the state's dual enrollment program set in motion a significant revision of the system's

overall policy on enrolling undocumented students.

North Carolina: Surprising Ruling Changes Undocumented Student Enrollment Policy

In November, the North Carolina' Community College System (NCCCS) directed its 58 member institutions to begin admitting undocumented students who meet the basic requirements of either graduating from a North Carolina high school or being 18 years of age. This directive reversed a 2004 rule that gave campuses discretion on
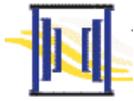
North Carolina Community College System

Preparing North Carolina's World-Class Workforce

Texas Association of Community Colleges

admitting undocumented students. The memorandum was issued by the system's general counsel, David Sullivan, who wrote that "colleges should immediately begin admitting undocumented individuals." Until then, around three dozen colleges had policies (some written, some unwritten) admitting undocumented students, but others barred their enrollment.

Sullivan's ruling was reported to be prompted by the case of an undocumented high school student who attempted to enroll in a community college through the state's dual enrollment Learn and Earn program. (See *Inside Higher Ed*, December 5, 2007.) (Learn and Earn is an early college program that allows public high school students to earn college credits while still in high school and receive a special tuition waiver for their college courses, regardless of their status.) The system office revisited its admission policy, based on a 1997 opinion by then-Attorney General, and now Governor, Mike Easley. Easley's ruling argued that community colleges, as open access institutions, cannot impose nonacademic criteria for admission.

Community colleges in North Carolina had begun admitting undocumented students in December 2001. At the discretion of individual institutions and their local boards, undocumented students could be admitted to non-credit, "basic skills" programs such as GED, adult high school diploma, continuing education, and non-credit bearing programs—programs that charge a universal fee and do not differentiate between resident and non-resident students. Undocumented students would not be eligible for state financial aid. As of August 2004, the system expanded the policy to include admission into credit-bearing programs at out-of-state rates.

The new rule, coming at a time when there appears to be little national public support for giving undocumented students' access to state higher education benefits, has stirred up controversy. All five gubernatorial candidates publicly oppose the new policy, but outgoing Governor Mike Easley endorses it. Retiring NCCCS President Martin Lancaster issued a passionate defense of the system's decision, arguing that undocumented students cannot be denied admission, given community

colleges' mission of open access and responsibility for preparing the state's workforce.

From the system's perspective, the decision to bring about a uniformity in admission policy also comes as part of a drive to bring more consistency and uniformity to operations in general. It follows recent actions around articulation agreements and common placement cut scores.

Texas: Health Care Funding Debate Lays Groundwork for Performance Funding Agreement

At the end of Texas's last legislative session, Governor Rick Perry vetoed $154 million in state funds for community colleges over a dispute regarding how the state pays for the health benefits of certain community college employees. Surprised by the governor's actions, community college leaders fought back, arguing that the health insurance funding followed state guidelines and that, without the funds, colleges would have to raise tuition and fees. A standoff lasted several months, with the governor and state lawmakers trying to work out a deal to restore the funds. The resolution of the dispute has accelerated consideration and possible consensus in the state on extending performance funding to community colleges through the Higher Education Performance Incentive Initiative.

The battle over state funding of health benefits for community college staff turned on a dispute over whether the state should pay benefits for employees whose salaries are paid by locally generated funds (a principle called proportionality.) The resolution, arrived at with help from key legislators and Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst, was a classic compromise. The funding would be fully restored, broken into a $99 million payment to cover the state's share of health benefits for college employees and a one-time payment of $54 million to help colleges transition to the governor's tighter definition of proportionality. At the same time, though the agreement propelled community colleges closer to incentive funding.

In 2006 the state's community colleges, led by the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) and influenced by

Achieving the Dream, had proposed a New Community College Compact to the state legislature. This proposal had called for new incentive funding in proportion to the level of effort required to achieve meaningful student outcomes, as well as a method of tracking institutional innovations and holding institutions accountable over time for improved student outcomes. The legislature approved $100 million in incentive funding for higher education, but the final legislation left out community colleges.

The agreement to restore health benefits funding promises to change that outcome. According to Gov. Perry, "Community colleges are an integral part of our higher education system in Texas and, through incentive funding, we can begin to hold all our institutions of higher education accountable for the students they produce rather than just those they enroll." The governor, in consultation with the lieutenant governor and speaker, will appoint a task force to make recommendations to the 2009 legislature on how future incentive funds should be allocated. TACC's New Compact is likely to be one of the inputs into the recommendations.

"We hope in January to see the Task Force named and then see hearings on the incentive plan," says TACC Associate Director Don Hudson. "Right now, nothing is set in stone, there is no agreement about where the money will come from and whether it will be new or existing dollars." Hudson notes, though, that the whole battle is likely to accelerate legislative consideration of incentive funding for community colleges, which he would not have predicted last summer when the governor announced his veto.

Resources

Finance Policies

Financing Policies to Improve Student Success in California

Invest in Success: How Finance Policy Can Increase Student Success at California's Community Colleges, from the Institute for Higher Education Policy and Leadership at California State University Sacramento, examines whether state financing policies stand in the way of greater student success in California Community Colleges. The report by Nancy Shulock and Colleen Moore assesses California's current funding policies for community colleges against higher education priorities set in pending legislation. This publication follows *Rules of the Game (*see *Achieving Success* October 2007), in which Shulock and Moore identified enrollment and course-taking patterns and financing policies as two domains of state policy that impede college efforts to help students succeed. *Invest in Success* details how state financing policies affect how much money colleges have, how they can use those funds, and how student enrollment is supported through fees and financial aid.
*http://www.csus.edu/ihe/*

Barriers to Financial Aid Uptake in California Described

Green Lights & Red Tape: Improving Access to Financial Aid at California's Community Colleges, a report from the Institute for College Access and Success, examines policies and practices at financial aid offices in 21 California community colleges and finds significant variation in financial aid practices that affect student access and success. Despite very low tuition and fees, many students faced other financial hurdles to attending college and continuing their education. Only 34 percent of California community college students apply for valuable forms of state and federal aid, compared to 45 percent of community college students in the rest of the country. The report describes common pressures that limit the ability of financial aid to address student needs, including onerous paperwork, inadequate aid availability, and limited resources for financial aid office operations.
http://www.ticas.org/pub.php

Regents Recommend Louisiana Performance Funding

The Louisiana Board of Regents' Task Force on Formula Funding for Public Universities and Community Colleges is charged with providing
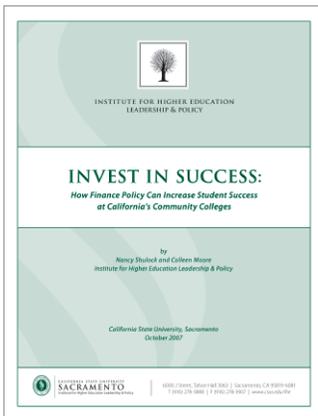
guidance in the development of a funding plan for Louisiana's public institutions. In *Funding Formula for Louisiana's Public Postsecondary Institutions,* it recommends creating a new funding formula, with three components: core funding for the basic operational needs for community colleges and four-year institutions; strategic investments for programs including workforce and economic development; and performance incentive funding designed to reward high performance and to provide incentives for institutional improvement. Based on this, the Board of Regents has proposed a plan that is expected to cost the state an additional $35 million. The performance-based formula is supported by the new governor, Bobby Jindal, who was unhappy with the current enrollment-based funding formula.
http://www.regents.state.la.us/pdfs/Finance/formula_2006

New College Finance Source for Maine Babies

The Harold Alfond Foundation, created by the founder of Dexter Shoes, has launched a project to make every child born in Maine eligible for $500 toward a college savings account. The project kicked off at two state hospitals on January 1, and will go statewide in 2009. The foundation anticipates investing $7 million in the approximately 14,000 children born in Maine every year. The program will be run by NextGen, a quasipublic agency that operates a program that provides one-time grants of $50 to start college savings. The Alfond grants can be used for courses at any accredited postsecondary institution. Parents will be encouraged to add to the account by donating $50 a month.
http://www.famemaine.com/nextgen/pdf/HACC_Press_Release.pdf

College Readiness/Developmental Education

High School Feedback Reports Improve School-College Connections

In *Reporting on College Readiness: Information that Connects Colleges and Schools,* the Southern Regional Education Board, looks at how improved connections among high schools and colleges can help better prepare secondary students for college success. The study focuses on high school feedback reports—the reports colleges send to high schools on how their graduates perform in college. Through these reports, colleges give schools, students, parents, and state leaders a perspective on who is being prepared for college—and who is not. The study finds that most SREB states report every year on how high school graduates perform as college freshmen, but the reports are often poorly disseminated and unwieldy to use.
http://www.sreb.org/main/highered/readiness/reportingoncollegereadinesst.asp

What Works in Community College Developmental Education?

Promising Practices for Community College Developmental Education: A Discussion Resource for the Connecticut Community College System, by Wendy Schwartz and Davis Jenkins of the Community College Research Center at Columbia University, summarizes findings on effective developmental education practice. Produced as a discussion resource for community college educators and state agency staff in Connecticut, the report groups promising practices into five categories:
1) program management and organization;
2) assessment, instruction and curriculum;
3) student supports; 4) faculty; and 5) public policy.
http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=551

Toward Improved Basic Skills Instruction in California

Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges, prepared by the Center for Student Success of the Research and Planning Group in the California Community Colleges, contains an extensive review of the literature related to basic skills practices and an overview of practices at California institutions; a self-assessment tool for colleges to reflect and benchmark their basic skills practices against findings from the literature; and a cost revenue model for programs to assess the revenues derived from developmental education programs over time. The report was commissioned by the system office to identify effective practices in basic skills programs, after the California Community Colleges Board of Governors adopted a strategic plan that included a focus on basic skills improvement.
http://css.rpgroup.org

Illinois Assembly Considers College and Career Readiness Pilot

In November, the Illinois General Assembly encted SB0858, mandating a three-year College and Career Readiness pilot aimed at reducing
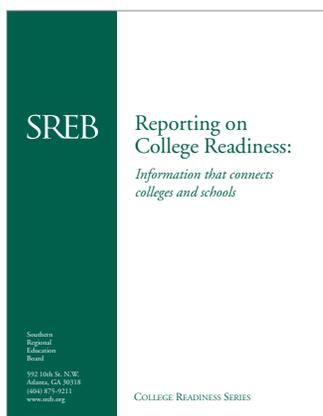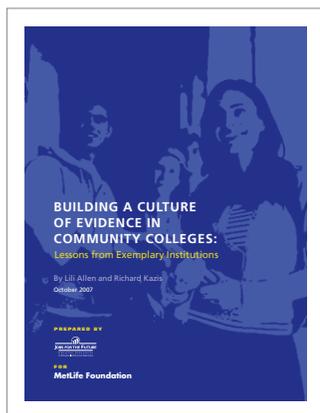
remediation and improving college readiness. The pilot will test better alignment of high school and college curricula, develop a system to align ACT scores to specific community college courses in developmental and college curricula, encourage stronger support systems, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Selection criteria for the four participating community colleges are comprehensive and include the percentage of students in developmental education and student demographics including socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and first-generation status. Another criterion involves the ability of colleges to partner with high schools to develop college and career readiness programs and strategies. The state will work with ACT to analyze up to 10 courses at each participating community college for purposes of determining student placement and college readiness. Colleges will be expected to create a data sharing environment in partnership with schools, provide additional support services, and create college and career readiness teams of faculty and counselors.

http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=095-0694

Data and Institutional Research

Using Data to Transform Community Colleges

Building a Culture of Evidence in Community Colleges: Lessons from Exemplary Institutions, prepared by Lili Allen and Richard Kazis of Jobs for the Future for MetLife Foundation, reports on four colleges that are national pioneers in using institutional research strategically and for improvement. The colleges—City College of San Francisco; Community College of Baltimore County; Indian River Community College; and LaGuardia Community College—have all received or been finalists for the MetLife Foundation Community College Excellence Award. The report looks at how these schools use student data for identifying problems and potential solutions. The authors suggest how community colleges can make more routine the use of data to identify strengths and weaknesses, pinpoint areas for improvement, and assess the impact on students of new programs and innovations. The experiences of these institutions support changes in state and community college system policies that can enable significantly more institutions to follow their lead.

http://www.jff.org/KnowledgeCenter/Building+a+Culture+of+Evidence+in+Community+Colleges%3A+Lessons+from+Exemplary+Institutions.html

Transfer and Articulation

How to Improve College Transfer Rates

A 2003 U. S. Department of Education report noted that only half of community-college students indicating a desire to transfer to a four-year institution eventually succeeded. Responding to this challenge, Stephen J. Handel, director of the National Office of Community College Initiatives at the College Board, has written "Second Chance Not Second Class: A Blueprint for Community College Transfer," which recommends strategies for increasing the number of students successfully transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions. The article highlights seven strategies for improving transfer, including: rigorous academic preparation, strong articulation policies, support for counselors, a transfer culture, and transfer targets for community colleges. It appeared in the September/October issue of *Change*.

http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Template.cfm?Section=Headlines&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=19355

Communicating about Community College Opportunity

Effective Communications Advocacy: Delivering Opportunity Through Community Colleges

Prepared by Douglas Gould and Company on behalf of the Ford Foundation Bridges to Opportunity initiative, this case study looks at how the Washington State Community and Technical College System launched and implemented a sophisticated strategic communications and advocacy campaign to build internal and stakeholder buy-in that has generated identifiable results in policy, finance, and attitudes. This case study was developed from interviews with college presidents, trustees, system-level staff, communications consultants, and public information officers.

http://www.communitycollegecentral.org/Grantees/Washington/WSTCCommunications_CaseStudy_2007.pdf

BUILDING A CULTURE OF EVIDENCE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES: Lessons from Exemplary Institutions

By Lili Allen and Richard Kazis
October 2007

PREPARED BY
Jobs for the Future

FOR
MetLife Foundation