



## **Achieving the Dream State Policy Newsletter May 2005**

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Achieving the Dream state policy newsletter.

This newsletter is being published by Jobs for the Future in our capacity as organizers of the state policy component of the Achieving the Dream initiative. (See [www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org) for more on JFF and our role in this initiative.) Achieving the Dream, funded by Lumina Foundation for Education, is a national initiative to increase the success of community college students, particularly those in groups that have been underserved in higher education.

JFF decided to publish this quarterly newsletter to make it easier for Achieving the Dream colleges, partners, state-level stakeholders, and other interested individuals to stay abreast of policy developments in the five Achieving the Dream states that relate to improved success for community college students. (The five states are Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.)

Each issue will contain: updates from the states, notes on reports and other resources on the topic of student success in community colleges, and a particular topical focus on a single policy issue of concern to Achieving the Dream colleges and state teams. We intend this to be a quick and easy way for you to learn more about the policy concerns and strategies evolving in each state and to promote collaboration and knowledge-sharing across states and among colleges and state policy teams.

The newsletter will change over time and we hope that readers will let us know how to improve its value from issue to issue. We also hope you will publicize this newsletter both within and outside Achieving the Dream circles so that we can reach a growing number of interested readers.

In this issue, we report on New Mexico's recently ended legislative session. We look briefly at new state-level developments in how ATD and other states are addressing the issue of serving undocumented students in community colleges. We also introduce the lead staffers from each of the Achieving the Dream states, so that readers will get to know a bit about them.

Our topical focus in this issue is an update on a new state data systems project involving the five Achieving the Dream states and another five states that are part of the Bridges to Opportunity initiative funded by the Ford Foundation. Launched in April, this initiative will help all ten states develop strategies to improve their systems for collecting and analyzing data about the trajectories and outcomes of community college students, whether they start in credit or non-credit programs, in degree courses or developmental education, directly out of high school or from another education program or the workforce.

Let us know what you think of "Version 1.0." We look forward to hearing from you. If you know anyone else who might want to receive this newsletter, please send their name and email address to Kelley Spada, Jobs for the Future ([kspada@jff.org](mailto:kspada@jff.org)). If you have any suggestions, send them to Richard Kazis, Jobs for the Future ([rkazis@jff.org](mailto:rkazis@jff.org)).

## **FEATURE: SUMMARY OF STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DATA PROJECT**

Across the United States, states are grappling with how to strengthen data and accountability systems in higher education. According to many policymakers, if states are supporting colleges and universities and their students with taxpayer money, they should expect to see results. But providing useful outcome data is easier said than done. Community colleges serve a diversity of students: some who intend to transfer to four-year colleges, some who are coming only for a few courses their employer wants them to take, others who are looking to earn a high school diploma or equivalent before trying to enter a college program, and still others who have a BA and are coming back from technical training. What are the right measures to track the educational progress of these diverse students? What questions do states have about different kinds of community college students—and want to be able to answer with their data systems?

These questions are the core of a new ten-state effort to improve state higher education and community college data systems so they can guide policy and drive improvement. As part of this project, we hope to help states make better distinctions among different kinds of community colleges students—such as those who are credential-seeking and those who are not, or those who are right out of high school and those who are older—and to track the progress and outcomes of these groups separately.

Participating states are: Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. The project is funded by the Ford and Lumina foundations. Three organizations are partnering to manage the project and provide assistance to participating states: Community College Research Center, Jobs for the Future, and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS).

In early April, representatives of all ten states met in Boston to reach consensus on the basic questions that states want to answer about their community college students. The meeting was a prelude to site visits that will be made to each state to assess whether the state can indeed answer those questions—and to recommend steps they can take to advance toward that goal.

The six-month project will not compel states to design and sign on to a common data system. The participating states have very different levels of capacity to collect and use student data on community college access and attainment. There are also wide variations in state cultures, governance structures, and priorities. Rather, the project goals are to develop a shared vision or framework for how states *could* organize their data systems to be more effective and helpful in assessing student progress and gaps—and to help each state work toward that vision as it sees fit, given its particular priorities and resources.

The visits to the states, led by NCHEMS, will help each state assess its existing data collection and warehousing systems and how the data collected is analyzed and used to inform practice and policy. Recommendations will emphasize how states can use available or easily collectable data more effectively. States will not be expected to do things they cannot or do not want to do.

This project has great potential. At a minimum, states will be able to articulate what they believe a powerful data system should capture—and ten states will develop a common framework for such a data system. Moreover, each state is likely to identify ways to improve its data system—for example, by linking disconnected databases or by defining different subpopulations clearly and disaggregating their outcomes. If participating states develop a strong and unified voice, they may have a powerful positive influence on both state and federal data system issues as they evolve.

Materials from this initiative are not yet ready for public dissemination. When they are, they will be made available to readers of this newsletter.

For further information, contact Richard Kazis, Jobs for the Future ([rkazis@jff.org](mailto:rkazis@jff.org)) or Dennis Jones, NCHEMS ([dennis@nchems.org](mailto:dennis@nchems.org)).

## STATE UPDATE: 2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION IN NEW MEXICO

New Mexico recently concluded an active legislative session that led to many policy changes around Achieving the Dream goals for improving success for community college students. Among the key legislative actions were:

### Student Financial Aid

- New Mexico passed legislation providing in-state tuition and aid eligibility for undocumented students who reside in New Mexico for one year and graduate with a New Mexico high school diploma or GED. (See below for more on this issue nationally and in other Achieving the Dream states.)
- The state enacted the College Affordability Act, which creates a trust fund, with the earnings from investments to be distributed to students with unmet need.

### Governance

- A new Higher Education Cabinet Agency was created to replace the Commission on Higher Education. The new department will have greater staff capacity than the previous commission and be governed by a newly appointed, fourteen-member advisory board that includes four university CEOs, three community college CEOs, and a tribal college CEO.
- The legislature also placed in statute the new Office of Workforce Training and Development created by executive order last year. The new office is designed to better coordinate workforce development programs and funding and provides an enhanced role for community colleges in these efforts.

### Instruction

- New Mexico enhanced its Articulation Law of 1995 by, among other things, requiring common course numbering and naming for equivalent lower-division courses.

For further information on these developments, contact Frank Renz ([frenz@nmacc.org](mailto:frenz@nmacc.org)).

## PROFILES OF ACHIEVING THE DREAM STATE POLICY LEADS

Each of the five Achieving the Dream states—Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia—has identified an experienced leader to manage its state policy component. They are:

### Florida

**Dr. Patricia Windham** is Associate Vice-Chancellor for Evaluation for the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education, Florida Department of Education. She has worked with Florida's data systems for over 25 years. She is a member of various research organizations, including the Association for Institutional Research and the National Community College Council for Research and Planning. She is a past president of both the Florida Association for Institutional Research and the Southeastern Association for Community College Research. She has been published in several journals including the *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College* and *Community College Review*, and presented at numerous research association conferences. She is the recipient of the National Community College Council for Research and Planning 2002 Outstanding Journal Contribution for articles published in the *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*.

### New Mexico

**Frank J. Renz** is the Executive Director of the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges. Dr. Renz holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas in Austin. He currently serves as Executive Director for the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges. The association is responsible for advocacy and policy development for community college education. Prior to joining the association, Dr. Renz was Chief Academic Officer at the University of New Mexico, Valencia, and Director of Research and Planning

and Associate Dean of Instruction at San Juan College. Dr. Renz was recently appointed by Governor Richardson as a member of the Governor's Progress Agenda for Education. He has served on numerous New Mexico state committees and task forces, and is a member of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges and the National Council of State Association Chief Executives.

### **North Carolina**

**Dr. Delores A. Parker** is Vice President for Academic and Student Services for the North Carolina Community College System. She leads the division charged with overseeing development, approval, and quality control of for-credit (curriculum) programs and basic skills in institutions across the system; financial aid, counseling, and other student support services; and resource development. Previously, Dr. Parker worked at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. She has also headed her own consulting firm and served as adjunct faculty in the graduate school at North Carolina A&T State University. Dr. Parker has many years of experience on North Carolina's community college campuses. Dr. Parker holds degrees from Clark College (now Clark Atlanta University), North Carolina A&T State University, and North Carolina State University. In 2004, she received the Stennis Center's Pacesetter Award for Southern Women in Public Service. She serves as an Elder of the Davie Street Presbyterian Church in Raleigh. Dr. Parker is currently writing a book on the life of her grandmother.

### **Texas**

**Don Hudson** currently serves as the Associate Director of the Texas Association of Community Colleges. He has worked for the association for nearly 10 years. Prior to his current position, Mr. Hudson served as Education Policy Specialist for the Texas Senate Research Center. Don Hudson holds an M.A. from Texas Tech University in Organizational Communication and a B.S. in Secondary Education from New Mexico State University. He is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in Higher Education Administration at the University of Texas at Austin. For his dissertation, he is completing an historical analysis of community college funding in Texas.

### **Virginia**

**Charlie White** presently serves as interim Vice Chancellor for Academic, Student Services and Research for the Virginia Community College System. He has served the VCCS for 34 years as Professor of Biology, Division Chairman, Division Dean, and Vice President for Academic and Student Services. Prior to entering the community college environment, he taught high school for four years. His academic credentials include an AA degree, BS degree in Biology, and MS and Ph.D degrees in Zoology and Entomology.

## **ISSUE UPDATE: UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

Many states—including the five Achieving the Dream states—are faced with a growing number of undocumented immigrant students graduating from their high schools. As a result, reports a recent JFF policy brief, more than twenty states are assessing and revising their policies related to access and affordability of higher education for undocumented students. Seven states have passed laws to clarify policy on enrollment, tuition, and financial aid in order to expand opportunity for these students, many of whom have lived many years in the United States. Other states, including Kansas and Arizona, have taken steps in the opposite direction, reducing access and opportunity in response to political opposition against granting public benefits to undocumented immigrants.

Several states have taken up this issue in recent months. As noted above, **New Mexico** passed legislation in its recently concluded session that made it easier for certain groups of undocumented students to afford public higher education. In **North Carolina**, lawmakers are introducing legislation that would allow all children of undocumented immigrants to pay in-state rates at North Carolina's public universities if they have attended NC public schools for four years, graduate from a state high school, and meet other criteria such as admission to a state university. This legislative effort has prompted intense reactions on both sides of the issue. In **Florida**, a similar bill allowing the best

students among the children of undocumented migrant farmworkers to qualify for in-state tuition was passed unanimously by the Florida House Education Appropriations Committee. Under the proposal (HB119), the children of illegal migrants could gain in-state status if they have resided in Florida for at least three consecutive years immediately preceding college entrance, if they have been accepted at a community college or university, and if they file an affidavit to become a permanent resident.

Radhas Roy Biswas, Access to Community College for Undocumented Immigrants: A Guide for State Policy Makers. ATD Policy Brief  
<http://www.jff.org/jff/kc/library/0248>

“Tuition Bill Targets Immigrants”  
<http://www.charlotte.com/mld/charlotte/living/education/11371457.htm>

“Supporters of Tuition Bill Ask for End to Attacks”  
[http://www.news-record.com/news/now/tuitionbill\\_042105.htm](http://www.news-record.com/news/now/tuitionbill_042105.htm)

“Bill Would Help Migrants' Kids Pay for College”  
[http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/content/news/epaper/2005/04/12/a6a\\_flamigrants\\_0412.html](http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/content/news/epaper/2005/04/12/a6a_flamigrants_0412.html)

## **RESOURCES: ACCESS AND SUCCESS FOR LATINO STUDENTS**

The need to improve strategies for access and success of Latino students in higher education has been highlighted in several recent articles and reports. An article in the *Austin (TX) American-Statesman* highlights some of the unique challenges Latino students face in succeeding in higher education and how institutions are attempting to respond to these challenges. A new study by the Educational Policy Institute provides further insight. The study—funded by Lumina Foundation—uses the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) database to track the outcomes of Latino students in the educational pipeline from the moment they and their families begin to aspire to postsecondary studies to the point of degree completion. According to the NELS data, less than one quarter (23.2 percent) of Latino postsecondary students graduate with a four-year degree within ten years of leaving high school—less than half the rate of white students (47.3 percent). Factors associated with family and student characteristics, and academic preparation play a role, as do student experiences once enrolled in postsecondary institutions.

The authors suggest that community colleges and the postsecondary system can improve outcomes once enrolled by helping Latinos maintain continuous enrollment and providing academic support while they are enrolled. The provision of academic support is particularly important, the authors report, as shown by the large effect of grade point average on the probability of completion. A state can also make a difference through financial aid policies and programs that enable Latino students to maintain continuous enrollment even when they have to reduce the number of classes they can take.

“For Latinos Path to College is a Steep One” (Log-in Required)  
<http://www.statesman.com/metrostate/content/metro/stories/04/3highed.html>

“Pathways to the Bachelor’s Degree for Latino Students”  
<http://www.educationalpolicy.org/Latino.html>

## **ADDITIONAL REPORTS AND RESOURCES**

### **Accountability**

The State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) has released the final report of its National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education. The Commission—co-chaired by former Governor Frank Keating of Oklahoma, and former Secretary of Education and former Governor of

South Carolina, Richard W. Riley—was organized by SHEEO to consider and recommend ways of improving accountability and performance in higher education.

“Accountability for Results: A National Imperative in Higher Education”

<http://www.sheeo.org/account/accountability.pdf>

### **Student Success**

The Community College Research Center has released a study examining the outcomes of low-skilled adult students enrolled in community college. The study draws on student record data available in Washington State that enables the tracking of both student academic outcomes and earnings.

Davis Jenkins and David Prince, “Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Statewide Longitudinal Tracking Study”

[http://www.tc.edu/ccrc/papers/Building\\_Pathways.pdf](http://www.tc.edu/ccrc/papers/Building_Pathways.pdf)

### **Financial Aid**

The Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education has a new study that examines how states can enhance student transfer through financial aid and articulation policies.

[http://wiche.edu/Policy/Changing%5FDirection/documents/Financial\\_Aid\\_and\\_Articulation\\_000.pdf](http://wiche.edu/Policy/Changing%5FDirection/documents/Financial_Aid_and_Articulation_000.pdf)

### **Traditional Age Students in Community Colleges**

Clifford Adelman of the U.S. Department of Education has written an important new report, *Moving into Town—and Moving On: The Community College in the Lives of Traditional-age Students*, organized around a series of transcript-based portraits of traditional-age community college students. Relevant findings will be featured in greater detail in the next issue of this newsletter.

<http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/comcollege>