ACHIEVING THE DREAM℠

COMMUNITY COLLEGES COUNT

STATE POLICY NEWSLETTER

October 2006

CONTENTS

Introduction

The Achieving the Dream summer 2006 state policy meeting, held in Denver, introduced two new states—Pennsylvania and Washington—to the initiative. The state teams attending the meeting also made presentations on their progress during the past six months in advancing policies to support student success. The highlights of those reports are summarized on page 6.

The state teams rolled up their sleeves and discussed alternative indicators of student success that might give a better picture of the trajectory of community college students through their careers, particularly those who start in developmental education. (The group crafted a statement to Secretary Spellings' Commission on the Future of Higher Education (see www.achievingthedream.org/publicpolicy/policyupdatesnews/default.tp) on the issue of a national student unit record data system and how such a system might best be designed and purposed. With the help of a representative of Achieve, Inc. (see www.achieve.org), the teams began to look at ways that community college systems and leaders can participate in, contribute to, and strengthen state efforts to align secondary and postsecondary curricula, assessments, and expectations.

In this issue of the *Achieving the Dream Policy Newsletter*, we talk with Keith Brown, Associate Vice President for Planning, Accountability, Research and Evaluation in the North Carolina Community College System. Keith talks candidly about the challenges and benefits of working with a data-driven initiative like Achieving the Dream—for North Carolina colleges, for the state, and for other states.

We also report on two new Achieving the Dream policy briefs—*Money on the Table: State Initiatives to Improve Financial Aid Participation* and *Regional Accreditation and Student Success, Can the Accreditation Process Help Community College Students?*

As always, you'll find resources that are relevant to state policymakers on issues of community college student success. We also note upcoming meetings that you might want to know about or attend.

We want more subscribers for this free quarterly e-newsletter. Who do you know who might benefit from being on the mailing list? Please send their names and contact information to our editor, Radha Roy Biswas, rrbiswas@jff.org.

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

CREATING STRATEGIES
for Educational and Economic Opportunity

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.)

Regional Accreditation and Student Success in Community Colleges: New JFF Issue Brief

By what mechanisms can the accreditation process support and accelerate institutional change efforts that focus on retention and completion?

Accreditation provides colleges with an opportunity to assess their internal systems and address issues of quality and effectiveness. This voluntary, peer-based system of accountability has come under a good deal of criticism in recent years. Yet from the perspective of Achieving the Dream, accreditation holds potential as a broad lever for improving student outcomes that can help institutions move in the right direction.

Jobs for the Future has taken an exploratory look at the potential of regional accreditation agencies and their processes to support and accelerate institutional change processes that are data-driven and focused on student success. Biswas looks at accreditation through the lens of student success in community colleges in our latest brief, *Regional Accreditation and Student Success in Community Colleges: Can the Accreditation Process Improve Student Outcomes?*.

The brief asks: To what extent can the accreditation process drive significant improvement in student persistence and completion at institutions that undergo the peer review process, particularly for students from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education? Can accreditation be an effective lever for institutional improvement in the area of student success? By what mechanisms can the accreditation process support and accelerate institutional change efforts that focus on retention and completion?

The paper takes a close look at the standards related to student success that the regional accreditation agencies have added or revised in recent years. It also examines the ways in which several *Achieving the Dream* colleges have used recent accreditation reviews to help them advance the agenda of improved student success.

The brief makes two key points:

- *Accreditation does not appear—by itself—to be a strong enough lever to drive higher education institutions to make student success the core of their review and improvement plans.*

- *However, the accreditation process clearly provides tools, opportunity, and processes that leaders can use to move complex and difficult change throughout their institution.*

JFF prepared this brief as background for a July 2006 meeting that brought the CEOs of almost all the regional accreditors together with leaders from a number of Achieving the Dream colleges. Co-hosted by JFF and the American Association of Community Colleges, the meeting opened a dialogue on how accreditation processes and agencies can support colleges that want to put student success front and center—and how lessons learned by Achieving the Dream colleges might help accreditors address complex challenges of learning outcome assessment and other issues related to their responsibilities.

Regional Accreditation and Student Success in Community Colleges is available at www.achievingthedream.org, and at www.jff.org.

State Initiatives to Improve Financial Aid Participation: Issue Brief from JFF

One state community college system head recently told us, "It just kills us to see students leave on the table federal financial aid that they are eligible for." Sharing this concern about lost resources and opportunities, a number of states and state community college systems have been exploring ways to increase rates of federal financial aid take-up. A new issue brief written by Jobs for the Future's Heath Prince, *Money on the Table: State Initiatives to Improve Financial Aid Participation*, describes and assesses the strategies of four states: California, Connecticut, North Carolina, and Texas.

Each of these states is pursuing a distinct strategy:

- California is focusing significant resources on statewide outreach and staff capacity.

- Connecticut is focusing on integration and automation of financial aid systems.

- North Carolina is lobbying for and receiving state funding to increase the number of financial aid officers on community college campuses.

- Texas is combining targeted student outreach, regional media campaigns, and cross-agency collaboration.

The report has already led Virginia to invite Connecticut system leaders to the Chancellor's Planning Retreat in August. The Virginia system wants to decide how the Connecticut model might improve its students' take-up rate on federal financial aid.

Money on the Table: State Initiatives to Improve Financial Aid Participation is available at www.achievingthedream.org, and at www.jff.org.

Interview with Keith Brown: Using Student Data to Drive Improvement

Keith Brown is Associate Vice President, Planning, Accountability, Research and Evaluation, North Carolina Community College System. Prior to joining the system office, he was dean of special projects and research at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. Keith talked with us about the challenges and benefits of working on multi-state, data-driven initiative like Achieving the Dream.

What is your role in Achieving the Dream in North Carolina?

I work with system- and state-level data for the initiative. I provide assistance to colleges and the state with data analysis down to the course-records level. My office does the data collection for the community college system and maintains the system's data warehouse. We also do the state-level analysis and reporting on student data.

Has Achieving the Dream changed the way you are looking at student data and student success in North Carolina?

Like many state systems, in the past the chief concern was on FTEs, enrollments, and graduation and retention rates. Little attention was paid to subgroups of students (except for gender or ethnicity or age). But through this initiative, we are looking at subgroups, such as where they began and how students who start in developmental education do compared to non-developmental education students. We are also looking at other subgroups, such as our adult literacy students, to track their progress into college-level courses.

"Since joining Achieving the Dream, we have seen a real change in how colleges and the system are producing, collecting, reporting, and interpreting data."

Achieving the Dream has helped us use data to focus on these populations, look at student success based on data, and identify holes in our data system to see what is missing. It has also helped us to look outside our own system and think about early interventions—for example, to look at data from high schools and set up partnerships with high schools to implement early intervention strategies.

Where do you think Achieving the Dream can be most useful in helping institutional efforts to improve student success?

The more we understand our developmental education students, the more we can help them succeed. For instance, we have recently found that students taking only developmental math are fairly successful in achieving certificates but do not progress to AA degrees. Why is that? What gets in the way? Is it the courses? Is it a problem of having to get through multiple levels of developmental courses? We need to understand this, and what is happening to these students at the state level, in order to make good state-level decisions.

What are some of the challenges of working with a data-driven initiative like Achieving the Dream?

One of the biggest challenges in this project, or any data project, is the quality of the data that we receive, collect, and report on. As we are finding out, there are some important gaps and holes in our data. For example, unlike Florida, we don't collect placement test scores, which are necessary for understanding the placement and performance of developmental education students and designing intervention strategies. We learned this by working with Florida in Achieving the Dream. So recently, we decided to introduce system-wide cut scores for developmental education placement across all 58 colleges. This will introduce to our system an important data element that will help us track the success of these students based on placement scores and see if placement scores can help predict success in college. This may not have happened without Achieving the Dream.

Have you seen any early successes or benefits from the state's involvement in Achieving the Dream?

We certainly see more due diligence on the part of colleges in their efforts to submit quality data to us. There is increased dialogue between colleges and our system office regarding the data that is collected. For example, as we worked with other states on testing the value of some new data indicators, we realized that one of our largest colleges had not been submitting any data on developmental education courses. This wasn't their negligence: through the on the groundwork of Achieving the Dream, we learned how the state's data collection system wasn't working right at the college level.

Since joining Achieving the Dream, we have seen a real change in how colleges and the system are producing, collecting, reporting, and interpreting data. Colleges now ask us for assistance in running analyses on some common variables and indicators. We're seeing more vocal engagement of colleges in interpreting our data collection and analysis systems—and in helping us improve them. They are looking to us for more consistency in data analysis—and that can only help everyone.

You are involved in the state data project, and have been since the beginning. What motivated you and others to do this? What power do you see in working with other states on issues of data?

My main motivation to participate in the data project was that we need more meaningful measures of community college student success. The measures generated from the federal Student Right to Know Act—graduation rates of full-time, first-time, degree seeking students—do not apply that well to community colleges because they don't really match our enrollment patterns or our student demographics (e.g., the many older, part-time, returning students who transfer out or are here to get certificates) So our interest in the multi-state data project was to find better, more appropriate, measures

"Achieving the Dream is a catalyst, an impetus for us to use data wisely and to move toward greater accountability."

of student success that would be more relevant to community colleges.

Significantly the data project is also about using data to better identify barriers to student success. We're asking: Are there other measures that might be better for telling the story of student success—and for identifying more accurately the barriers to success students face, particularly our developmental education students?

Working with other states has another important benefit: identifying benchmarks for our performance among our peers. Are we doing well relative to them or not? If we were to go to the legislature and say we have 30 percent graduation rates, we would be immediately compared against four-year colleges, which is not really a fair comparison. Having comparable three-year benchmarks against other states will help us help us make the case to policymakers more effectively.

Working with data has helped us in our decision making. The cut score policy is one example. Another is dual enrollment. Do dual enrollment students need remedial work when they enter college? What does that tell us about our policies? Connecticut requires all dually enrolled students to take placement tests, but not North Carolina. Should we? Data might help drive important policy changes.

We're starting to look for ways our data can help high schools figure out who will need remediation. How do end-of-course tests in North Carolina correlate with our placement tests when graduates come into our system? If we can make headway here, we could identify high school interventions that could have a lot of power and impact on student outcomes.

We are using data to look at issues across states—especially with colleges along the border with Virginia. We're starting with a look at the flow of students between the states. Washington state is doing a lot of things we think we can learn from. There are lots of opportunities now for collaborative research projects across states.

You and the state system office signed onto a statement outlining principles that should guide a federal student unit record system. Why did you do that?

The Federal Unit Record Database, if done probably, will help us have more complete student data on transfers, student movement, long-term graduation rates, and other outcomes. From a research perspective, it is important to know what happens to students from the time they enter postsecondary education to when they exit the system and enter work. Yes, there are security and privacy concerns, but they are not unmanageable. The biggest concern is how the data will be used: will states be allowed to use the data?

We want to make sure that any federal system avoids a "one size fits all" solution. Community colleges are very different from four-year institutions. Applying one-size-fits-all performance measures is erroneous. So the system design has to be done properly if we are to get a better picture of what's going on with all our students.

What has been the most interesting or exciting aspect of your work with Achieving the Dream? Any surprises?

The analysis of developmental education students is exciting. It raises more research questions. We found that developmental education had greater impact on younger students than older ones. We also busted some myths on this. It is a popular perception that taking developmental math is a large barrier to success. But we found that developmental students in math do better. But that raised more questions. Did students who take multiple levels do well or just those requiring one level of remediation? Does the level of develop-mental math or the number of courses taken affect student success? These are things we need to know.

This is what makes Achieving the Dream exciting and important. It is a catalyst, an impetus for us to use data wisely and to move toward greater accountability.

State Policy Developments

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Commits to Student Success as System Goal: At a recent strategic planning meeting, the Connecticut community college system decided to make *student success* an umbrella goal for its budgetary agenda for the coming year. As the system advocates for its colleges and their students, student success will be the theme that organizes its priorities and policy proposals, which include requests related to full-time faculty and funding for more academic and student services support. In addition, Connecticut now plans to expand the data initiative to eight other colleges.

Engaging all Twelve Colleges in the State: Connecticut's system office is pursuing strategies to make Achieving the Dream more visible and influential across the state. Teams from the three colleges met this summer to discuss their institutional change strategies and priorities and to identify state-level supports they could use. The presidents of the three participating colleges will make a presentation about their efforts to the full Council of Presidents in October, which will be followed by an October presentation to the state system's Board of Trustees. Data training has been organized for the three participating colleges: the system intends to expand the data collection efforts associated with Achieving the Dream to all 12 colleges in Connecticut.

How Institutional Change and Policy Interact: One Achieving the Dream college—Housatonic Community College—is moving rapidly toward a redesign of its developmental math sequence to make it open entrance/open exit. There are a host of state policies—around registration, grading, and payment—that make the transition to this new model difficult. A state team is meeting with college personnel to resolve these issues so that the new model can be launched in spring 2007.

FLORIDA

State Research Leads to Institutional Change: Research conducted by the Florida Department of Education on outcomes for students who take a three-unit student success course are so impressive—for both incoming developmental and non-developmental education students—that all four colleges participating in Achieving the Dream now require certain subgroups of their students to take the course. This topic will be a key element when the state community college system hosts the October 19-20 meeting of the Achieving the Dream colleges in Orlando. The department's research staff has turned to a new research analysis on student success in gatekeeper courses, in conjunction with other Achieving the Dream states participating in the multi-state data project.

NORTH CAROLINA

Achieving the Dream Colleges Meet: The four participating North Carolina colleges met in Raleigh on September 13 to share their progress and plans for 2006-07. Data issues and early data on student success outcomes analyses were discussed. In early October, the system office's annual conference will be held in Greensboro featuring several presentations on Achieving the Dream, including a keynote by Sandy Shugart, president of Valencia Community College, a Florida Achieving the Dream college, as well as a panel on North Carolina colleges' experience in the initiative.

State Approves Funds for Student Services: Responding to a high-priority request from the North Carolina Community Colleges System, its faculty, academic officers, and Board of Trustees, the state legislature agreed to new funding that will make it possible for community colleges to support one financial aid staff member at each of the 58 North Carolina community colleges, plus one new staffer on student supports at the NCCCS system office. The system office has also received approval to create a new high school liaison staff position for coordination and policy issues related to dual enrollment and early college efforts.

NEW MEXICO

College Planning Session Identifies Policy Priorities for 2006–07: Mexico hosted a meeting where Achieving the Dream colleges discussed their year's experiences and lessons learned through the initiative. They identified three areas of action for further work on the policy front: increasing developmental education funding; aligning ABE and developmental ed to help low-skilled populations transition to postsecondary education and credentials; and getting the next round of the College Affordability Act funded.

OHIO

Ohio Association of Community Colleges highlights Achieving the Dream: The Ohio Association of Community Colleges highlighted the Achieving the Dream initiative at a retreat of its members on September 14-15. The retreat also featured appearances from Ohio's gubernatorial candidates, Ken Blackwell and Ted Strickland.

KnowledgeWorks Foundation Hosts Workshop on Learning Communities: KnowledgeWorks Foundation hosted a workshop on September 20 for the Ohio Achieving the Dream colleges (Cuyahoga Community College, Jefferson Community College, North Central State College, Sinclair Community College, and Zane State Community College). The workshop focused on creating learning communities at the community college level. Experts from Kingsborough Community College in New York led the one-day workshop, which focused on the nuts and bolts of learning communities, the Kingsborough experience, and strategies for identifying targets, needs, and resources. Four out of the five Ohio colleges will be creating learning communities as part of their 2006-07 implementation plans.

Ohio Welcomes New Achieving the Dream Team Member: The Ohio Policy Team welcomes a new member—Reginald A. Wilkinson, executive director of the Business Alliance on Higher Education and the Economy. The alliance serves as a catalyst, mediator, and advocate for an enhanced and more strategic role for higher education as a significant contributor to the state's economic growth. Its formation was recommended by the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy.

TEXAS

Texas Community Colleges Adopt New Measures of Accountability: In 2005, Texas adopted a new accountability system for public higher education institutions, developed by the Texas Association of Community Colleges, the Legislative College Board, the Governor's office, and institutional representatives. The Accountability System is available at http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/Accountability. The system has three essential components: five categories of key accountability measure participation, success, excellence, research, and institutional effectiveness; contextual/explanatory measures to help place the key accountability measures in context and/or to better describe the efforts of each institution; and institutional explanation and description. The system includes data for thirty-five public universities, nine health-related institutions, four Texas State Technical Colleges and three two-year Lamar State Colleges. The state's two-year colleges were added to the system in early 2005. The system has separate sets of measures for community colleges and four-year institutions. Community college measures of success include all credential-seeking students, not just degree-seeking students. Developmental education measures are still in development.

Texas Association of Community Colleges Adopts New Legislative Priorities: TACC's Legislative Priorities, adopted at its July summer conference, include increasing financial aid to community colleges. TACC also presented testimony on behalf of community colleges and made financial aid policy recommendations to the House Higher Education Committee earlier this summer.

VIRGINIA

Chancellor's Planning Retreat: One of the featured plenaries at this year's Chancellors Planning Retreat, which brought over 150 leaders from all 23 Virginia community colleges to Williamsburg, was a session involving leaders from all five Achieving the Dream colleges. Richard Kazis of Jobs for the Future facilitated a question and answer session. The college leaders explained to their colleagues what they were trying to do through the initiative, why they felt it was important, and how they hoped to bring lessons from Achieving the Dream efforts to other colleges in the state and to the state system. Particularly impressive was the college's assessment of those components of the initiative that they would want to sustain even without the implementation grants, because they involve more of a change of college priorities and mindset than they do resource allocation.

WASHINGTON

Fast Off the Block: Washington State, a new entrant to Achieving the Dream, is moving quickly to take advantage of this initiative. A meeting in early October will bring Washington into the Achieving the Dream state data project. The state's participating colleges—Big Bend Community College, Yakima Valley Community College, Highline Community College, Tacoma Community College, Renton Technical College, and Seattle Central Community College—will meet in early December to discuss their first-year strategies and to share state policy priorities with the team led by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges.

Resources

Remediation

Paying Double: Inadequate High Schools and Community College Remediation

This issue brief from the Alliance for Excellent Education, prepared with support from MetLife Foundation, looks at the high costs of remediation in the nation's schools and colleges. It suggests that the nation loses more than $3.7 billion a year in remedial education, with the bulk of that occurring in community colleges, because students are not learning the basic skills needed to succeed in college or work while they are in high school. The authors go on to suggest that changes are needed at the high school level to reduce the need or remediation, and they identify three areas needing attention:

- The rigor of high school curriculum, which is considered a strong predictor of college readiness;

- Statewide performance standards for college admission that would enable educators to assess student progress toward readiness for college and convey clear expectations to students, parents, and high schools regarding student performance; and

- Alignment between high school content and the expectations of colleges and employers.

Available at www.all4ed.org/publications/remediation.pdf

Can Community Colleges Protect Both Access and Standards? The Problem of Remediation

Writing in *Teachers College Record,* Delores Perin details a qualitative case study that investigated state and institutional practices for remediation in 15 community colleges selected for region, size, and degree of urbanization. The six states in which the colleges were located varied on the level of regulation of institutional remedial policy. Perin found that community colleges tend to place low-scoring students in remedial courses even in the absence of a state mandate. She discusses this as a struggle between the access mission of the traditionally open-door community college and the drive to protect educational standards.

Available by subscription to *Teachers College Record*. The abstract can be found at www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=12328

Lack of College Readiness a Problem for Community Colleges

"At 2-Year Colleges, Students Eager but Unready," in the *New York Times*, discusses how community colleges around the country are being inundated with remedial students as four-year systems increasingly refuse to admit them. At least twelve states explicitly bar state universities from providing remedial courses or taking other steps, like deferred admissions, to steer students needing help toward technical or community colleges. Other states, like California, have set an ambitious goal to cut the proportion of unprepared freshmen to 10 percent by 2007, largely by testing them as high school juniors and having them make up for deficiencies in the twelfth grade. These efforts had the unwanted effect of clustering remedial students in community colleges.

Available at www.nytimes.com/2006/09/02/education/02 college.html?adxnnl=1&ref=education&adxnnlx= 1157407718-jpdywRt+xa9uSzOFPkfB3Q

Tackling Remediation in High School

"Colleges Heading to High School Campuses to Get Seniors Ready," in the *Las Vegas Review Journal,* describes the attempts of local community colleges to reduce the number of students needing remediation by working with school districts to offer developmental courses on high school campuses. Starting in January 2007, a pilot program will allow some high school seniors to take remedial and 100-level college courses at seven high school campuses. Three classes will be offered, including a remedial math course on intermediate algebra and two college-level courses, an introduction to college composition and the fundamentals of college mathematics. High school instructors with Master's degrees will teach the remedial courses, while community college faculty will teach the college level courses. The Nevada Board of Regents just approved a measure to allow colleges to offer remedial education at a reduced price of $25.00 per course, compared to the going rate of $157.50 per three-credit course.

Available at www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2006/ Aug-21-Mon-2006/news/9157034.html

Access and Financial Aid

New Education Trust Report on College Access

Promise Abandoned: How Policy Choices and Institutional Practices Restrict College Opportunities, a new report from the Education Trust, criticizes trends in federal, state, and college policies and practices that have moved precious financial aid dollars away from low-income needy students and block low-income students from higher education. Katie Haycock, director of the Education Trust, argues that despite the perception of progress, gaps in college-going and college completion for poor and minority students are wider than they were thirty years ago. The report includes an analysis, commissioned by the Education Trust, that reveals under-the-radar decisions within higher education that have shifted scarce financial aid money away from low-income students to help institutions recruit students from more affluent families. Over the last ten years, institutional financial aid decisions have disadvantaged low-income students even more than the shifts in federal and state programs. The report provides recommendations for increasing minority and low-income student enrollment and improving graduation rates.

Available at www2.edtrust.org/EdTrust/Promise+Abandoned +Report.htm

Changing Trends in Financial Aid on Low Income Students

"How the Financial Aid Flows," an article from Inside Higher Ed, discusses changing federal student aid trends and their implications for low-income students. Federal student financial aid, with its various needs tests, generally goes to low-income students, but federal tax breaks for college costs are diverting a significant of federal assistance toward wealthier students. The average tax benefit received by families with incomes of $92,000 or more is greater than the average benefit for those with incomes less than $32,000. This analysis comes from "Student Financing of Undergraduate Education: 2003-04," released by the National Center for Education Statistics. Data in the NCES report show that tax breaks make up a relatively small share of student aid for low-income students but the majority of aid for wealthier students. The report includes a wealth of other data, including numerous tables on enrollment patterns, average tuition costs and demographics.

Available at http://insidehighered.com/news/2006/08/24/aid

Accountability

2006 *Measuring Up* Report Released

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education just released its fourth biennial report card for higher education. *Measuring Up 2006*, which has both a national report card and 50 state reports, tries to answer the question, "How well do the 50 states and the nation educate and train their citizens?" Like its predecessors, the report compares and evaluates the performance of each state along critical dimensions of college opportunity and effectiveness to assess national performance. This edition has a number of new features. It is the first to provide international comparisons for the nation as a whole and for all 50 states. New persistence indicators have been introduced by drawing on a new source of data: the IPEDS enrollment survey from the U.S. Department of Education. In its "learning category", *Measuring Up 2006* provides data for all 50 states on the extent to which colleges and universities prepare students to contribute to the workforce.

Available at http://measuringup.highereducation.org

Making Accountability Work: Community Colleges and Statewide Higher Education Accountability Systems

This working paper from the Institute for Higher Education Policy, by Wendy Erisman and Lan Gao, shows that most current statewide accountability systems fall short in incorporating the diverse missions and special challenges of community colleges. The authors point out that the way community colleges are considered in accountability systems in most states is not sufficient to provide policymakers with the information needed to identify policy goals options and interventions that will help them meet higher education goals. The paper focuses on eight key states that have strong community college networks and an established or developing statewide accountability system.

Available at www.ihep.org/Pubs/PDF/Accountability Report.pdf

Data and Research

Improving Graduation Rates by Tracking Students

An article in the July/August 2006 issue of *Change Magazine* describes the problem of low graduation rates and a simple methodology used by the University of Florida to improve these rates among its students. The university adopted a series of changes in its academic and advising processes in a program of "tracking" students. Elements of tracking include course sequencing and guiding students in choosing their major. Access is by subscription. For information, go to www.heldref.org

En Route to the Baccalaureate: Community College Student Outcomes

This research brief from the American Association of Community Colleges, an Achieving the Dream partner, uses data from the National Center for Statistics to examine community college students who went on to attain Bachelors' degrees. A particular focus was how community college students outcomes compared to those of students who did not attend community college en route to the baccalaureate.

Available at www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/ContentGroups/ Research_Briefs2/B_B_Brief_Final.pdf

New CCRC Publication: Research Tools

The first issue in the new Research Tools Series from the Community College Research Center (an Achieving the Dream partner) features "Using Census Data to Classify Community College Students by Socioeconomic Status and Community Characteristics," by Peter Crosta, D. Timothy Leinbach, Davis Jenkins, David Prince, and Doug Whittaker. Given that colleges typically lack socioeconomic status information for students other than those that fill out a Free Application for Federal Financial Aid, institutional and policy efforts to better understand socioeconomic factors contributing to student access and attainment are limited by inadequate data. This paper describes the methodology that CCRC researchers used to try to address this data gap by estimating the SES of individual students in the Washington State community and technical college system using SES descriptors from the Census information on their geographic area of residence.

Available at http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp? UID=430

Additional Resources

Why Colleges Are So Hard to Change

This article by Robert Diamond in *Inside Higher Ed* discusses the need for, and resistance to, institutional change—and what it takes to bring about institutional change. The article responds to the Spellings Commission report, which calls for greater accountability from college and universities. The author identifies internal and external factors that make institutions resistant to change, and he then proposes a number of ways those factors can be addressed. Some of the suggestions for facilitating change, by those operating both within and outside institutions, resonate with Achieving the Dream approaches to supporting and driving improvement.

Available at http://insidehighered.com/views/2006/09/08/ diamond

ECS Brief on High School to College Transitions

In *Involving Families in High Schools and College Expectations*, a policy brief from the Education Commission of the States, Jennifer Dounay looks at state policies that address the steps necessary to negotiate the transition from high school to college. While most students voice the expectation that they will go to college, many do not know what kind of preparation it takes to get there.

The brief examines the gap between educational aspirations, what students and their families need to do to achieve those expectations, and what states are doing to better communicate to students and parents the importance of being academically prepared for college and the steps to take to achieve that level of preparation.

Available at www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/70/37/7037.htm

Tuition for Undocumented Immigrants in North Carolina

The issue of in-state tuition for undocumented students resurfaced last year in North Carolina. Former Governor Jim Hunt urged higher education leaders from around the country to fight for illegal immigrants' access to higher education, and he supported a state bill that would have given illegal immigrants in-state tuition if they attended a North Carolina school for at least four years, graduated from one of the state's high schools, and signed an affidavit promising that they intended to pursue citizenship. But the bill died on the floor after several legislators withdrew their support.

Read about this issues in the *Winston Salem Journal* at www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ%2FMGArticle%2FWSJ_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1149190592647&path=!localnews!stategov!&s=

Excellence in Adult Education Program

The Kansas Adult Education and Family Literacy Program has won state and national plaudits for its success in helping meet students' goals and for the unusual way it distributes money. Findings about the program come from research done by MPR Associates, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education to review performance-based funding models across the country. MPR Associates looked at 10 states and profiled Kansas, Indiana, and Missouri. It found that no other state adult education program in the country distributes, as Kansas does, as much as 88 percent of its state and federal dollars based on performance. Kansas determines the success of its program through an annual review of how many students complete it, get jobs, pass the GED, learn English, go on to postsecondary education, or meet whatever goals they had when they started. Kansas began performance-based, instead of enrollment-based, funding with 37 adult education programs in 2000. When six programs failed to meet the new, stricter standards, their funding was distributed to more successful programs.

Read about this in the *Lawrence Journal World* at www2.ljworld.com/news/2006/aug/21/adult_education_program_excels/?state_regional

Upcoming Events

Connecticut: The presidents of three Achieving the Dream Colleges will be making a presentation to the board of trustees of Connecticut Community Colleges and nine other community college presidents at the Connecticut Community College Presidents' Council in October.

Florida: Florida is holding a fall meeting with its Achieving the Dream Schools in late October. Colleges will share preliminary data among themselves and discuss any challenges faced and best practices established during Year Two implementation, evaluation, and assessment.

Florida Developmental Educators Association's Annual Conference: For the second year in a row, the Florida state team will attend the Florida Developmental Educators Association's annual conference in October to discuss the Achieving the Dream project. At a panel discussion, a state representative will present an overview of activities, and each institutional representative will provide details on their Achieving the Dream initiatives.

Summit on African-American and Hispanic Males in Higher Education: From November 29 to December 1, Florida's Hillsborough Community College, an Achieving the Dream institution, is hosting this three-day summit focused on the complex issues of under-representation of African-American and Hispanic male students in higher education. The conference will feature presentations by national experts and is open to anyone interested in these issues.

Virginia: On October 23, Virginia's Achieving the Dream colleges will meet to compare their efforts to "Build a Culture of Evidence." Teams from all five participating colleges will attend. The meeting will be keynoted by Linda Hagedorn of the University of Florida, a lead partner in organizing the data facilitation support for Achieving the Dream colleges and an expert in using data to understand the retention and transfer behavior of community college students.

Washington: On December 5, there will be a meeting of the state-level Math Transitions Project, a project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, designed to improve alignment of high school and community college math curricula. This meeting should provide Achieving the Dream colleges in Washington an opportunity to explore these issues and how they can support the project and their local sending high schools.