

Achieving Success

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Achieving
the Dream™

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Accelerating Achievement

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FEATURE

New Publications from Jobs for the Future

DRIVING INNOVATION:

How Six States Are Organizing to Improve Outcomes in Developmental Education

More and more young people are enrolling in postsecondary education, particularly in community colleges, with the goal of preparing for jobs that provide access to middle-class wages. Unfortunately, too few students succeed. There are many reasons for this, but one of the most important is the large number of students who lack the academic skills to do college-level work upon enrolling—and the dearth of tested, effective ways to help them catch up. A significant redesign of remedial education—how it is organized, delivered, and taught—is required if the nation's community colleges are to achieve more than incremental progress in increasing student success. The vast majority of our nation's community colleges need substantial ongoing supports to accomplish that redesign.

The most logical and efficient locus of such support is on the state level, through policies and capacity-building efforts that identify promising practices, test program outcomes, and disseminate proven models quickly and effectively. Six states—Connecticut, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia—are putting the state policy strategy into action through the *Developmental Education Initiative*, launched in 2009 by MDC and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation.

Driving Innovation describes what the six Developmental Education Initiative states have set out to do and why, the momentum they have developed, and next steps in their efforts to overcome obstacles to better results.

LEAVING NO WORKER BEHIND:

Community Colleges Retrain the Michigan Workforce—and Themselves

In 2007, Michigan undertook a bold mission: to retrain tens of thousands of dislocated workers and other low-skilled adults so they can qualify for jobs in emerging and expanding sectors of the economy. Community colleges would train these workers while the state would cover up to \$5,000 of their college and related expenses each year. By 2011, more than 150,000 adults had enrolled in NWLB-financed training, and 59 percent of participants eligible for federal workforce programs had found new jobs after completing their training.

Leaving No Worker Behind examines what five community colleges in Michigan learned about meeting the needs of dislocated, jobless, and otherwise low-skilled adults—and how they changed course offerings, student supports, and other practices to respond to the particular needs of older dislocated workers. These lessons can help institutions and states nationwide as they strive to serve this rapidly growing college population.

Florida's Student Success Dashboard: A Tool for Facilitating Institutional Data Use



The Florida Department of Education is preparing to roll out an interactive "Student Success Dashboard" in an effort to make state-level data more visible and transparent among Florida's 28 community colleges. The dashboard was created in response to the challenge to better leverage the rich data housed within the state system. The tool, a collaborative effort of SAS and Florida's Department of Education, will be released this summer for wide use among institutional leadership.

The dashboard has two purposes, according to John Hughes, Vice Chancellor of Evaluation at the Department of Education. It aims to: initiate a system-wide discussion about what data are necessary to drive student success and who needs access to the data; and increase institutional buy-in and demand for student longitudinal data use.

Additionally, Hughes expects the dashboard to encourage a collaborative data-sharing environment between the state and institutions, among institutions, and within institutions. While the technology behind the dashboard is not new, one of the most distinctive features of the Florida effort is creating a cultural shift about how community colleges and their state authorities share and use data. By performing analyses such as tracking transfer/dual enrollment students, or by looking at the grade distribution of gatekeeper courses across institutions, these reports will demonstrate that many institutions face common challenges. The dashboard also will facilitate discussions about areas where students face the most barriers, such as in transitioning from developmental to credit-bearing courses or into programs of study.



Feedback on the dashboard prototype has been universally positive, according to Hughes. "In concept, everyone agrees that it's a great idea; in practice, we'll have to see. Getting people to use it will be the real success."

Next steps: Once the dashboard goes live this summer, the Division of Florida Colleges will release a series of dashboard reports in conjunction with training webinars. The reports will serve as examples for institutions, demonstrating ways in which the dashboard can tell "stories" about particular cohorts or groups of students (e.g., those who have passed gatekeeper courses or persisted from semester to semester). The primary audience for the dashboard includes:

the Council of Student Affairs comprised of the state's vice presidents for student support services; the Council on Instructional Affairs comprised of the academic vice presidents; academic deans; and equity officers. "Equity officers have never had a tool to do this [kind of analysis] before," says Hughes, "so this is a huge step up."

Further steps will include engaging faculty in discussions about the use of data. Hughes suggests that the process of developing their own dashboard reports will encourage faculty to participate in cross-institution conversations around increasing student success and directly linking interventions with evidence-based results.

For further information, please email John Hughes, john.hughes@fldoe.org.

Connecticut Kicks Off Data-Driven Developmental Education Redesign



When the Connecticut Community College System joined the Developmental Education Initiative in 2009, it pledged, along with its peer states, to engage in a data-driven effort to develop innovative approaches to delivering developmental education in order to dramatically improve student outcomes. To that end, last May, Chancellor Marc Herzog pulled together presidents, academic deans, and deans of students from all 12 Connecticut community colleges at the Developmental Education Forum. Participants examined student success data for the system as a whole and for their own individual colleges, and then shared their data—good and bad—with the colleges in the system. According to Assistant Chancellor Mary Anne Cox, participants were surprised by the data, which showed very low success rates among students with the greatest need for basic skills.



The stark data concerned the forum participants and fueled their commitment to redesign the delivery of developmental education. The participants shared promising redesign strategies underway at their colleges and launched a Developmental Education Task Force comprised of deans, college presidents, CCCS Director of Planning, Research and Assessment, Dr. Corby Coperthwaite, and the chairs of the deans' councils as ex-officio members.

The task force addressed two pressing issues, submitting its preliminary report to the Council of Presidents in May 2011. First, the task force asked what the definition of developmental education should be across the system. While some in the state felt developmental education should be limited to preparing students for college-level work, others felt it should also be a means of delivering basic skills. The report recommended defining developmental education as pre-collegiate preparation.

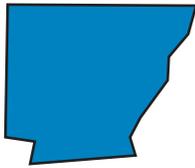
Second, the task force studied whether students testing into developmental education should be required to complete developmental requirements before enrolling in college-level courses. The report recommended that completing or testing out of developmental courses in math, English, and reading be prerequisites for entering college-level survey courses. It also suggested that all developmental education be attempted in the first or second semester.

"To look for common ground is not easy," noted Assistant Chancellor Cox, especially among a large number of colleges serving diverse student populations, "but when there is a recognition that it will serve students better, or that we're not serving students as well as we could be, then there is the impetus to examine [long-standing assumptions]."

The task force further recommended that its members continue meeting, engaging now in a deeper study of whether all colleges should follow a common developmental education sequence. If the task force recommends a common sequence, its members also will evaluate whether there should be a threshold for assessment scores, below which students would be placed on an alternative educational pathway. The Council of Presidents will act upon the task force's final report in June 2011.

For further information, please email Mary Anne Cox, mcox@commnet.edu.

Building Capacity in Arkansas Community Colleges Through Statewide Professional Development



The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) recently partnered with the newly created Student Success Center at the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges to provide administrators and faculty with statewide professional development targeted at increasing strategies and tools for supporting student success. The state role in providing robust professional development opportunities came about with the 2009 passage of Act 1971, which authorized the state “to provide professional development opportunities to help remedial education faculty gain knowledge in best practices and trends in the instruction and delivery of remedial education.”

According to Karen Wheeler, Associate Director for Academic Affairs at ADHE, the professional development activities aim to build faculty capacity by providing them with a common knowledge base and exposing them to national thought leaders whose programs demonstrate proven outcomes. The capacity-building efforts focus on two content areas: models for developmental education and remedial delivery that accelerate developmental course completion; and using data to drill down on areas that need the most attention.

Most recently, the partners sponsored workshops for both two-year and four-year institutions. Held in conjunction with the state’s annual Student Success Symposium, the workshops included sessions with two national experts. Carolyn Jarmon of the National Center for Academic Transformation discussed strategies for redesigning developmental education. Peter Adams described Community College at Baltimore County’s Accelerated Learning Project, which promotes mainstreaming remedial students in credit-bearing courses.



“Our participants understand that these are some of the best thinkers in the country. They are hungry for information,” states Wheeler. “It gives them something actionable to take back to their institutions.”

The workshops targeted specific content areas and the activities they support aim to engage various departmental levels within institutions, from developmental education faculty to academic deans. The participants work to address questions such as: How does the intervention work? Who else is doing it? Is there evidence that demonstrates its success?

According to Wheeler, resources and staff time to execute these meetings and workshops have been deployed efficiently due to the strong collaboration between the association’s Student Success Center and ADHE. The partners’ next steps include establishing a formal series of workshops throughout the academic year so that institutions continually build on the success of professional development activities. Wheeler has witnessed the tools and practices actively implemented across campuses, and she receives frequent requests for more information about the workshops. Going further, she says, the partners would like to develop a formal mechanism for following up with institutions. “It works,” says Wheeler. “It really does work. This type of [statewide] professional development has created an entire movement in how we design and deliver developmental education.”

For further information, please email Karen Wheeler, karen.wheeler@adhe.edu.

Data-Driven Improvement

National Survey of Student Engagement Data Dashboard.

Hundreds of campuses use their NSSE results in innovative ways, and these have been featured in *Using NSSE Data, Lessons from the Field*, and other NSSE publications. You can also search for examples of NSSE use via an interactive database, with new examples added regularly. Browse the database to gather instructive accounts of how colleges use their NSSE results to improve student success.

http://nsse.iub.edu/html/using_nsse_db/



Leveraging the Power of State Longitudinal Data Systems: Building Capacity to Turn Useful Data into Useful Information. Data Quality Campaign. May 2011.

Seeking to create competitive workforces and improve the quality of their education systems, states are pursuing policy agendas that support efforts to better prepare students for postsecondary education and careers. To inform such an agenda, a statewide longitudinal data system is an invaluable asset. It can serve as a tool to help a state answer pressing policy questions and improve practice. This report explores ways that states can use data to inform interventions, school practices, and district and state policies.

<http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/resources/details/1303>

Performance Incentives to Improve Community College Completion: Learning from Washington State's Student Achievement Initiative. Nancy Shulock & Davis Jenkins. IHELP. March 2011.

The Student Achievement Initiative, a policy adopted by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, draws on intermediate measures of student progress to reward colleges for improvements in student achievement. This policy brief offers lessons from the initiative and examines policy choices that Washington faced in designing and implementing SAI. It also points to choices that leaders in other states will confront when considering adopting performance incentive policies as a means to improve student outcomes.

http://www.csus.edu/ihelp/PDFs/R_WA_SAI_Interim_PolicyBrief_0311.pdf

Investments in Innovation

Aspen Institute Ranks Top 120 Community Colleges in the United States—Announces Eligibility for First-Ever \$1 Million Prize Fund for Excellence. Aspen Institute. April 2011.

In April, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program released a list of the top 120 community colleges, based on high standards for learning, completion rates, and training for competitive jobs. These schools are eligible to compete in the \$1 million fund for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. One college will win about \$700,000, with

RESOURCES CONTINUED

two or three runners-up also receiving cash awards. The winners will be announced in December.

<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/news/2011/04/25/aspen-institute-ranks-top-120-community-colleges-united-states-announces-eligibility>



Get with the Program: Accelerating Community College Students' Entry into and Completion of Programs of Study. Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center Columbia University. April 2011.

Community colleges offer a wide array of programs but typically provide little guidance to help students choose and succeed in a program of study. This paper suggests how community colleges can rethink their practices at key stages of students' engagement to substantially increase rates of program entry and completion.

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=885>

Policy Supports

Community Colleges and Regional Recovery: Strategies for State Action. Brookings-Rockefeller Project on State and Metropolitan Innovation. Richard Kazis. May 2011.

States that want to maximize the return on every public dollar invested in preparing for sustainable economic growth can use the current moment to their advantage. This paper argues that by focusing on improving student success in community colleges, and engaging those institutions in regional economic development, state leaders can ensure a stable supply of skilled workers. They can prepare their states to exit the recession poised to be productive, attractive to employers, and competitive for jobs and wealth creation.

http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/0518_community_college_kazis.aspx

The Quiet Revolution of Open Learning: A Commentary by Kevin Carey. The Chronicle of Higher Education. May 2011.

In 2010, congressional negotiators failed to approve the American Graduation Initiative, which would have been an historic opportunity for funding community college reform. Kevin Carey, policy director for Education Sector, provides insight into the aftermath of this failure and suggests next steps for the federal departments of labor and education. His basic idea is simple. A number of community colleges will receive funding under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant program to serve students online. The colleges will be obliged to make those materials—videos, text, assessments, curricula, diagnostic tools, and more—globally available for free.

The availability of these resources could “change higher education for huge numbers of students, many of whom will never attend a community college at all.”

<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Quiet-Revolution-in-Open/127545/>



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