

Achieving Success

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FEATURE

New Publications from Jobs for the Future

TESTING GROUND:

How Florida Schools and Colleges Are Using a New Assessment to Increase College Readiness

While many states pursue the long-elusive goal of improving college completion rates, Florida has emerged as a national leader. Driving these efforts is a growing awareness of the large proportion of students who come to college—especially community college—unprepared for college-level coursework.

Florida is turning to a familiar tool of education reform—assessment—to tackle the national imperative of improving college readiness. *Testing Ground*, a new brief written by Pamela Burdman for Jobs for the Future (JFF), describes how Florida's Division of Colleges worked with K-12 partners to design, plan, and launch an ambitious college-readiness agenda; at its center is a new assessment that is simultaneously a placement tool for colleges and a preparedness indicator for high schools and their students. By using data about student outcomes to create a sense of urgency and making faculty central players, Florida's education system is well on its way to implementing major student success reforms.

INNOVATION AT SCALE:

How Virginia Community Colleges Are Collaborating to Improve Developmental Education and Increase Student Success

Ten years ago, Virginia's community colleges, like many, did not place student success high on their list of priorities.

Today, improving student success is the single most important goal of the Virginia Community College System:

- The state aims at a 50 percent increase in the number of community college students who complete a degree, transfer to a four-year institution, or earn a workforce credential.
- For students from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education, the target is a 75 percent increase.

Innovation at Scale, a new brief written by Rose Asera for JFF, describes Virginia's process of redesigning developmental education to increase college readiness—and student success—across the state's 23 community colleges and 40 campuses. This case study highlights the key roles of college leaders, faculty, staff, and, in particular, the chancellor and the system office as the state prepares to implement its ambitious plans.

For more information, please contact Lara Couturier at lcouturier@jff.org.

New Jersey's Big Ideas Project Integrates Many Achieving the Dream Strategies



New Jersey, a state that has attended multiple semiannual Achieving the Dream/Developmental Education Initiative state policy meetings to learn from the cross-state network, launched an ambitious initiative called the "Big Ideas Project" in June 2011.

Better use of data for decision making and improvement are both one of the eight "Big Ideas" in the project, and also a strategy for supporting the other Big Ideas, which have a three-year timeline for implementation. Given New Jersey's decentralized governance of community colleges, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) coordinates the Ideas project and the colleges have been eager to participate.

"Coordinated autonomy," is how NJCCC President Lawrence Nespoli described the independent agency's role. NJCCC's purpose is a combination of advocacy and collaboration with the state's 19 colleges, which serve 400,000 students at 70 campuses. New Jersey has three colleges in the next Achieving the Dream cohort that will serve as regional hubs for spreading Achieving the Dream principles: Passaic County Community College in North Jersey, Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) in Central Jersey, and Cumberland County Community College in South Jersey.

NEW JERSEY'S EIGHT BIG IDEAS

- Transform developmental education
- Align expectations between K-12 schools and community colleges
- Create student success data
- Promote adjunct faculty development
- Expand joint purchasing practices
- Build academic consortia
- Build alternative learning delivery systems
- Use core learning outcomes and common assessment tools in the 10 highest-enrollment general education courses

Of the Big Ideas, "We're doing this not because we have to," said Casey Crabill, president of RVCC. "We made the choice to do this." And why now? "We'd just gone through four years of staggering [enrollment] growth and public funding reduction," Crabill said. "Tinkering around the edges isn't going to do it."

So far, New Jersey has met its first two deadlines for implementing the Big Ideas data strategy. First, the schools' institutional researchers have created a common data collection process similar to emerging national models for student success; and second, the model, based on a six-year progression, began testing at five campuses in November, aiming for a full rollout in January 2012.

Crabill said that the Big Ideas plan broadens RVCC's current use of data, providing a common context

for discussions on academic and student services, budget conversations, even faculty assessments. "If you can follow data across multiple years, you can celebrate student success and also intervene by having conversations when things fall off track."

Colleges are tackling the challenges of developing common data definitions in order to compare their progress more effectively. "We're helping people engage in data definition so that everyone understands," said Crabill. "The culture of community colleges is so passionate, full of stories of success against incredible odds. What's important is to balance using numbers with the passion of those student stories."

Achieving the Dream and Developmental Education Initiative States Receive Federal Funds to Support Workforce Development



Funded by a mandatory appropriation in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, \$500 million in Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grants (TAA Grants) will be awarded to colleges annually until 2014. Grantees receive funding either through participation in a consortium or with an individual college application, and are now focused avidly on creating implementation plans.

The TAA grants are designed to make a difference in the lives of students who fall outside the traditional 18- to 22-year-old's collegiate pathway. In the words of the Department of Labor, the grants are meant to aid "employees who study," not "students who work."

Colleges in 13 Achieving the Dream and Developmental Education Initiative states received funding, enabling them to execute innovative strategies that promote student success. These strategies include integrating basic skills with occupational credential programs; career coaching and supports for student career decision making; and developmental education redesign.

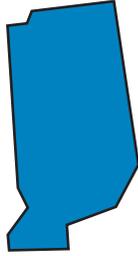
A number of Achieving the Dream and Developmental Education Initiative states will use the grant money to streamline pathways toward certificates and degrees. Seven state proposals built upon the principles of JFF's *Breaking Through* initiative, from contextualized learning to career coaching to employer partnerships: Arkansas, Hawai'i, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia. College consortia in Arkansas, Virginia, and North Carolina also highlighted the redesign of developmental education curriculum.

Other states with strong Achieving the Dream participation chose to target industries for which their region is well known. Washington State focused on direct training in the aerospace sectors, from advanced manufacturing and machinery to aircraft assembly and maintenance. The Health Professions Pathways consortium, led by Cincinnati State University in Ohio and including 19 colleges nationally, will provide training and credentials aligned with job advancement. Pennsylvania's state policy team chose a two-pronged approach. Its community colleges will focus on advanced manufacturing; energy distribution, production, and conservation; and health care technology. At the same time, the state consortium plans to regionalize its capacity building based on varying industry mixes and priorities across Pennsylvania, focusing on opportunities for laid-off workers who have little chance of returning to prior wage levels without new credentials.

A 10-state consortium which includes Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Ohio, and Washington will use the grant to create nationally portable, certificate-level programs in STEM and to build a national model of multi-college cooperation in the design and delivery of high quality, labor market-driven occupational programs. The consortium will help build a national repository of high-quality technical curricula and curricular materials that will be made available at no charge to all community colleges.

For more information on all 40 TAA grantees, see <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/eta20111409fs.htm>.

Adult Basic Education Alignment in Indiana



Like many states in Achieving the Dream and the Developmental Education Initiative, Indiana is carefully assessing the role of Adult Basic Education delivery to improve student success. Until now, ABE has been housed under Indiana's K-12 Department of Education, making its coordination with either workforce skills training or postsecondary study a challenge. Furthermore, multiple ABE providers have operated in silos, creating a confusing set of entry points for adult students and discouraging the transition of ABE students into workforce training or postsecondary systems.

Indiana is joining a growing national movement, in which states have implemented bold policies to restructure Adult Basic Education by realigning it to community college, postsecondary, and/or workforce systems in order to promote stronger student transitions.

Indiana's ABE system will be administered by the Department of Workforce Development and delivered through regional partnerships. Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana, DWD's postsecondary partner, believes that this newly aligned partnership will more efficiently and effectively permit ABE students to build their college- and career-readiness skills and earn entry-level credentials with value in the labor market. The short-term certificates are all offered and aligned with Indiana's list of high-demand, high-wage jobs. Once students earn a certificate, job placement assistance is immediately available via the Department of Workforce Development. As a result, Indiana's ABE students will exit with a valuable certificate and be more prepared for college.

"The whole concept is innovative by clearly eliminating duplication," said Jeffrey Terp, Ivy Tech's vice president of program analysis and engagement. "It aligns limited state resources and maximizes dollars spent. No state has dollars to waste."

To execute this plan, Indiana policymakers have designated several key program and structural changes:

- The Indiana DWD and Department of Education will oversee jointly ABE's daily operations.
- WorkOne, a career services partner agency of Indiana's DWD, will provide expertise in career counseling, academic advising, and reemployment.
- New "regional consortia" will include school corporations, workforce investment regions, and community organizations, permitting each region to tailor ABE and reemployment activities according to its own needs.
- After the first-year benchmark, federal funding will include a performance-based incentive.
- Adult education will focus on occupational certification beyond GED-attainment as its primary goal.

"The GED is a great milestone for many; it's important and something to be proud of," Terp said. "But data shows that a GED alone doesn't support increased wages. [Indiana's realignment] lets students see pathways . . . clear, direct linkages to better careers."

For more information, contact Jeffrey Terp at jterp@ivytech.edu.

Data-Driven Improvement



Beyond Degrees: Lessons Learned from Skills2Compete-Maryland

Rachel Unruh and Eric Seleznow. National Skills Coalition. August 2011.

Skills2Compete-Maryland is the state's mandate for implementing an integrated, training-focused, data-driven, and accountability-based workforce and education system. *Beyond Degrees* examines Maryland's steps toward documenting the initiative's progress and identifies state policy and data lessons from which other states may learn.

<http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/assets/reports-/beyond-degrees.pdf>

Bringing Business Analytics to the College Campus: Using Fiscal Metrics to Steer Innovation in Postsecondary Educations

Jane Wellman and Louis Soares. September 2011.

This report describes how the application of business analytics to educational performance goals may lead to a higher return on investment in higher education. It goes further to discuss how incorporating business analytics in policy measures may also lead to a better understanding of the relationship between spending and outcomes.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/09/pdf/business_analytics.pdf

Investments in Innovation

Turning Around Failure: System Triage for Severely Under-Prepared Adults in Higher Education

Jobs for the Future, Education Commission of the States, and Knowledge in the Public Interest. September 2011.

In August 2011, JFF, ECS, and KPI co-sponsored an expert-moderated Jam (an online, text-based discussion) about developmental education. The Jam findings were synthesized into a recently released report, identifying specific domains in which education advocates, educators, and system leaders must come together to tackle the issue of low-level learner success.

http://www.gettingpastgo.org/docs/Turning_Around_Failure_Jam_Report.pdf



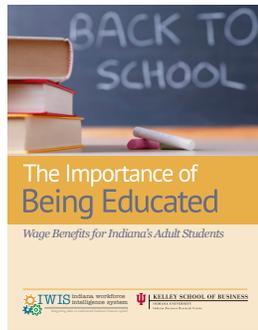
The Opposing Forces that Shape Developmental Education: Assessment, Placement, and Progression at CUNY Community Colleges

Shanna Smith Jaggars and Michelle Hodara. Community College Research Center Columbia University. November 2011.

This paper identifies three sets of opposing forces that shape developmental policy and practice: system-wide consistency versus institutional autonomy, efficient versus effective assessment, and promotion of student progression versus enforcement of academic standards. It describes how each of these three tensions shape developmental policies, practices, and student progression patterns.

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=974>

Policy Supports



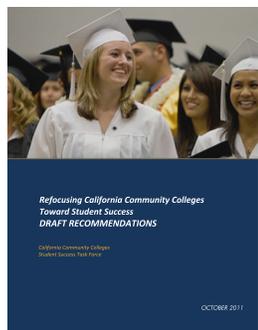
The Importance of Being Educated: Wage Benefits for Indiana's Adult Students

Indiana Business Research Center and Kelley School of Business, Indiana University. October 2011.

A recent study from the Indiana Business Research Center demonstrates that adult students in Indiana may earn higher annual wages if they take more than 12 college credit hours. The study also asserts that if these students earn a credential or certificate, they may continue to see an increase in annual earnings.

<http://www.ibrc.indiana.edu/studies/ImportanceOfBeingEducated2011.pdf>

pdf



Refocusing California Community Colleges Toward Student Success: Draft Recommendations

California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force. October 2011.

Legislation enacted in 2010 called on the California Community Colleges Board of Governors (BOG) to convene a task force of system representatives and external partners for the purpose of developing a plan to bring about significant improvements in success rates of California's students. Following review and revision, the draft recommendations will be submitted to the BOG in January 2012.

http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/DocDownloads/PressReleases/SEP2011/PDF_%20Student_Success_Task_Force_Draft_Recommendations_Sept_2011.pdf

Committee on Measures of Student Success Draft Report

Committee on Measures of Student Success. US Department of Education. November 2011.

Created under the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the Committee on Measures of Student Success is charged with developing recommendations for two-year degree-granting higher education institutions to comply with the law's graduation and completion rate disclosure requirements. The committee released its second draft of recommendations this month and will meet on November 29th to discuss final revisions. They will submit a final report to the Secretary of Education by April 2012.

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/cmss-committee-report-11-15-11.pdf>



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