

WINTER 2009

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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.



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In this Issue

Welcome to the Winter 2009 issue of *Achieving Success*, the quarterly state policy newsletter of Achieving the Dream. In this issue, you'll find:

- An interview with Dr. Donald Berwick, President and CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

Dr. Berwick is one of the nation's leading authorities on healthcare quality and improvement issues. He has spent his career working to accelerate innovation in health care institutions and to ensure that these developments inform our nation's health care policies. Dr. Berwick discusses his experience and how it can be instructive to the higher education policymakers and institutional professionals engaged in Achieving the Dream's efforts to design and implement policies supporting student success.

- A summary of recent headlines from Achieving the Dream states.
- Links to useful resources on community college success and state higher education policy.

We are always looking for new subscribers and are particularly interested in reaching readers in state offices, two-year institutions, and education research and policy organizations. Please refer anyone you think should receive this newsletter (free, of course) to our new registration page on the Jobs for the Future Web site: www.jff.org/register.php

If you have questions about newsletter subscriptions or content, please contact Jeff Wetherhold, jwetherhold@jff.org.

Q&A WITH DR. DONALD BERWICK

What We Can Learn from Health Care Improvement Efforts

The true test of good policy is if it promotes better performance and outcomes by institutions and individuals. One of Achieving the Dream's strengths is the interaction of institutional innovations—and lessons learned from them—with efforts to design and implement policies that support student success. The initiative's theory of change is built on the belief that evidence from local innovation should inform the direction of policy, and that smart, data-informed policy should help support, sustain, and

expand better practice. While building and maintaining a dynamic and effective interaction between practice and policy can be challenging, evidence from other fields demonstrates that it can have a powerful, deep, and long-term impact.

The experience of those trying to accelerate innovation and quality improvement in health care is instructive for those who are pursuing similar goals in higher education. In health care, as with higher education, there are key questions



Dr. Donald Berwick
President and Chief Executive Officer
Institute for Healthcare Improvement

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to consider when encouraging innovation: What are effective and cost-efficient strategies for motivating a disparate set of independent institutions to significantly change their strategic priorities, processes, procedures, and resource allocations in the name of quality and better results? How can change be leveraged so that it reaches a wide scale, visibility, and impact?

To learn more about spreading innovation based on improvements at local institutions, we spoke with Dr. Donald Berwick, President and CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI). A nonprofit organization founded in 1991, IHI seeks to improve the quality of health care worldwide. It works with health professionals to accelerate the measurable and continual progress of health care systems and encourage breakthrough improvements in the field.

*Dr. Berwick is one of the nation's leading authorities on health care quality and improvement. He has been an outspoken supporter of measuring the effectiveness of healthcare professionals and sharing the results in order to drive change, citing the lack of such knowledge as an obstacle to innovation and improvement. Dr. Berwick's work is profiled in Atul Gawande's best-selling book, *Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance*. In addition to his duties at IHI, Dr. Berwick is also a clinical professor of pediatrics and health care policy at Harvard Medical School and has served on national task forces and associations established to improve health care quality.*

What is IHI's theory of change for improving health care delivery and quality? How can a relatively small nonprofit such as IHI influence health care reform?

IHI was founded 20 years ago with the mission of promoting improvements in health care systems. We have a pretty self-conscious strategic plan for how to change a large social system. While that plan has developed over the years, it has four primary elements: motivate change, encourage innovation, spread that innovation, and raise joy in work.

Motivation means increasing tension and the will for change. For example, we have for many years measured hospital death

rates, which are highly variable. There can be a 400 percent difference in the death rate from one hospital to another. We are constantly measuring that information and pushing it out to hospitals, the public, and others in order to create the will for change.

Another aspect of motivation is optimism. We try to build a sense of confidence by showcasing places that are doing better. For example, we just visited a hospital in the Midwest that has an extremely low death rate. They have decreased it significantly in recent years, and we highlight that and explain how they are doing it. This builds optimism.

A third element to motivation involves reaching out to the public at large. We have a Director of Strategic Communications who is responsible for seeing that we get the story of improvement out to the public.

Innovation is the real engine of IHI. We will identify a topic like pain control, hand-offs, waste in surgery, or surgical safety, and then dig into it to see if we can come up with an idea that is better than the prevailing design. For example, what does waste-free surgery look like? Or how could you have perfect hand-offs among nurses when shifts change?

Sometimes, these research and development topics are approached *de novo*, where nobody really knows how to do it. In such cases, we work with a few hospitals that want to try to perfect the process. More often, these are search problems; in those cases, we scan institutions to discover who is doing a particularly remarkable job in an area. Often, we discover that we do not have to invent the change; we can describe what someone else is doing.

Once we have identified the innovation, the next major element is *spread*. This is the hardest part of our strategy, and we use many methods for accomplishing it:

- **Networks:** We formed the so-called "IMPACT Network" of hospitals that pay dues to participate in face-to-face meetings and conversations over the Internet. They hear news of recent innovations straight from the research and development group. We have two

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levels of involvement: an executive level comprising senior-level leaders like CEOs and chief medical officers, and a team level for groups working on specific improvement projects.

- **Strategic Partners:** In health care, there are large entities such as a multi-hospital system that owns, say, 30 or 40 hospitals. In education, perhaps there is an analogue in large associations of colleges. We maintain collaborations, or strategic partnerships, with these entities in which we deal with the senior group and they spread knowledge internally to their network.
- **Campaigns:** These are large-scale efforts where we declare a specific topic and ask hospitals all over the country to sign up to learn about how to make changes in that area. We have had two major campaigns to date, and they have been very successful in reaching the field. We have 4,000 hospitals in that network, so when we discover something really good, it can get to large scale quickly. For instance, surgeon and writer Atul Gawande and his research team have developed a well-conceived and tested “checklist” to ensure that patients receive safe surgery. At IHI, we are challenging all the hospitals that worked with us in the 5 Million Lives Campaign to start testing the checklist by a date certain—eventually leading to widespread implementation. We were able to put this innovation to work, quickly, with the help of the web and phone conversations.

The final element in our strategic plan we call *joy in work*. This mainly deals with training young people who are going to come into health care so that they are better able to help make improvements. The main vehicle here is what we call the IHI Open School for Health Professions. If you go to our Web site (www.ihl.org) you will see a link to the school. It is our attempt to reach out to students of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and health

administration so that they are learning about improving patient safety, methods, tools, and so forth.

All of this amounts to an organization that is designed to get results. If you look at the big picture of how we gain influence, we make sure that we are getting results in the field and that we are documenting them very well. When we can show up and say that we can reduce death rates, cost, or waiting time, then the phone starts ringing and people want to understand what we are doing. Our secret weapon is results. We are always after results.

How do you distinguish data collection and reporting from data use? Where does that distinction fit in terms of comparing performance across health care institutions?

There are two kinds of uses of data. You can use data, on the one hand, for judgment—that is, for selection, reward, or punishment. Most of the time when people talk about measurement, they are talking about using data for this purpose. That is not what we are about.

We at IHI are in the business of the other use of measurement: not for judgment but for improvement. We are interested in fostering a learning process. For instance, let’s say you are trying to do a better job in terms of infection control in a hospital. You first have to know what your infection rate is. If you go to our Web site and look under infection control, one of the things you will find are tools and resources that explain how to measure infection levels in your hospital and track them over time. You can also take a course on measurement through IHI in order to learn how to use the measurement process constructively. So we are big on tracking how well you are doing, but it is measurement for the sake of learning and improvement, not for the sake of judgment.

Measurement is a very textured enterprise. For example, if you are controlling infections, you can measure whether you are doing the right cultures or giving the right antibiotics. Those would be process measures. Or you could measure infection level, and you could do so either

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globally, by measuring all infections, or precisely, by measuring the number of wound infections in your hospital, for instance. Those would be outcomes measures. Measurement construction is a pretty difficult part of improvement, and we spend a lot of time helping teams understand and get better at it.

How do you build support within the health care industry for a process of measurement and continual improvement? In that process, how do you minimize politicization, both at the local level and more broadly?

I don't have a neat answer to that. Ten years ago, I would have said that it is not necessary. I would have said that there is plenty of good will inside health care and that, if we have the right measurements, the right support, and enough encouragement, then we will see improved care. I no longer think that.

The status quo in health care is very wealthy and very well defended. So when you suggest change—a new role for nurses that makes better use of their skills, for instance—you do get pushback. I have come to feel, as have my colleagues, that you have to reach the public at large and build demand for safe care, or reduced waste, or dignity in health care, and then move forward from there.

We have a very clear agenda in this area. We are happy to speak out and write about these topics. It is tough, however, because the more we try to create public discomfort, the more likely we are to alienate our best supporters—those hospitals that want to make change. It is like walking a tight rope, and we have to do it every day. We try to be aggressive enough to get some edge and respectful enough to get some affection.

To ignore the public is a formula for delay. I don't want to do that. We need the public will. One theory we work from is that, in general, the reason that we are failing in health care is *not* that we are not trying hard enough: we are trying as hard as we can. The reason we are failing is that our systems and processes are broken, and the workforce generally knows that.

So in a way there is no secret here.

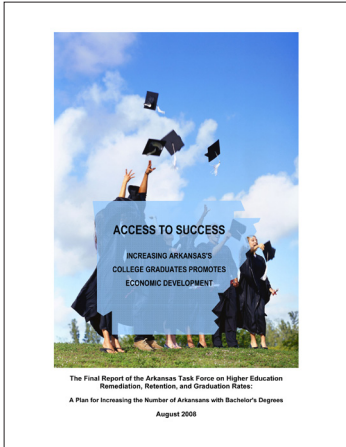
The workforce and the public need to know that there are problems and that improvement is important. There is a lot of respect in our message. We are not blaming the workforce at all. We are only saying that we need to change some things in order to make care better.

Achieving the Dream is designed to promote institutional change at the local level, which in turn informs state and national policy. This is very similar to the change you are describing in hospitals and health care as a whole. What advice do you have on translating local improvement into system-wide change? What is the relationship of state or federal rule or regulations to local improvement and innovation?

I would revisit the strategic approach I talked about earlier. It is important to identify and encourage the innovations and the successes that are out there. You have to showcase them. You must then capture these innovations and put them in a form that others can understand. Finally, when you find a success, make the successful professionals the teachers. Find venues where they can be together with their peers. Third-party learning is not nearly as effective as setting up a networking system where the innovators become active mentors to the places that want to learn from them.

On the policy side, there is an issue of timing. You don't want to push too hard too soon. There will be plenty of willing participants out there who are going to want to learn from the best and try to adapt it, but they will be scared away and turned off by too much pressure.

At some point, though, when you now know how to save a life or how to prevent patients from suffering serious complications—or how to educate a student—then the regulators begin to have a role. They can say, “Why would we continue to not do this the best way?” That is what should be worked into a regulatory base. I think when learning comes first and rules come later you are on much firmer ground.



RECENT STATE DEVELOPMENTS

Headlines from Achieving the Dream States

Arkansas

The Arkansas Task Force on Higher Education Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates has released its final report, *Access to Success: Increasing Arkansas' College Graduates Promotes Economic Development*. The task force was established to help Arkansas raise its percentage of adults who have earned a Bachelor's degree to meet the average for member states of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). While Arkansas ranks high among SREB states in the percentage of high school graduates who enroll in college, the state lags behind many on measures of Bachelor's degree attainment. The task force makes eight recommendations for raising Arkansas' completion rate: strengthening the education pipeline; improving preparation; decreasing remediation; accessing financial aid; increasing retention and graduation; enhancing funding and governance; addressing data needs; and supporting economic development.

<http://www.adhe.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/AHEC%20Board/Presentations/jpTaskForceReport-LATESTVERSION.pdf>

Connecticut

The Connecticut Department of Higher Education, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Labor, has released *Higher Education: Building Connecticut's Workforce*, a report outlining the impact that public higher education has on the state's workforce. The report includes several analyses specific to Connecticut's twelve community colleges. For the year 2006, 78 percent of Connecticut's community college graduates were employed in-state within three quarters of graduation. This figure was the highest for any public higher education sector in Connecticut. The report also includes employment rates by sector for community college

graduates; among in-state graduates, Health Care and Social Assistance was the most likely area of employment.

www.ctdhe.org/info/Reports2008.htm

Florida

On Election Day, Florida residents rejected Amendment 8, which would have allowed counties to levy a local sales tax to fund community colleges. Currently, Florida's community colleges receive no local funding. Nearly 7 million Floridians voted on the amendment, with 57 percent opposing the measure. Amendment 8 would not have imposed any local taxes, but instead would have amended the state constitution to allow counties to put such taxes on the ballot in the future for voter approval. The measure was originally proposed by Miami-Dade Community College and won the endorsement of the *Miami Herald*.

[http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Florida_Amendment_8_\(2008\)](http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/Florida_Amendment_8_(2008))

Massachusetts

In November, the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation released its *2008 State New Economy Index: Benchmarking Economic Transformation in the States*. The index uses 29 indicators to rank states by how well they have adapted to the "New Economy," which the foundation defines as knowledge-dependent, global, entrepreneurial, rooted in information technologies, and driven by innovation. The rankings highlight the broad economic impact of quality higher education. Massachusetts ranked at the top of the list, due in large part to its higher education network and the high percentage of the population with at least a two-year college degree. Washington, which is also a member of the Achieving the Dream initiative, was ranked second in the index.

www.itif.org/index.php?id=200

STUDENT SUCCESS SNAPSHOT



Issue #1, June 2008

Why Consider Expanded Success Measures?

Virginia, along with several other founding member states in the Achieving the Dream: Community College Course Initiatives, is looking for an effort to expand the traditional (PDR) definition of success to be more reflective of the community college mission. This expanded definition of success recognizes that:

- Most students attend part-time and often take longer than three years to complete a credential.
- Most students need developmental education which extends their education career.
- Many students complete coursework and other four-year institutions without earning a two-year credential.
- Improved knowledge about student success will enable community colleges to serve their students in new and better ways.

Who Is Part of the Cohort?

Students who were first-time-in-college,* program placed in fall 2003 comprising the cohort.

What Is Success for Students in Virginia Community Colleges?

Students were placed in the following unique categories:

- **Earned an award:** Students who completed a certificate, diploma, or degree.
- **Transferred without award:** Freshman in a four-year institution in subsequent three years (fall 2006 through spring 2007) without having earned an award at community college.
- **Still Freshman:** Students who took classes at the community college in fall and/or spring in fourth academic year 2008-09.

What are Some Highlights from the Data?

- Overall, 42.6% of entering students in fall 2003 achieved a measure of success within four years—16.1% earned an award, 10.1% transferred without an award, and 16.5% were still enrolled.
- While one in seven (14.7%) students earned an award on-campus, the proportion of students earning an award by college ranged from 10.0% to 36.7%.
- While this shift in definition of student success is more reflective of the community college mission, the success of students who do not meet a success measure continues to challenge community college leaders to develop success strategies for all students.

*Fall 2003 first-time college students include students who began in the preceding semester and exclude formerly dual-enrolled students.

Prepared by Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

Ohio

On November 14, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* profiled Ohio's efforts to use public higher education as a mechanism for keeping valuable industries in state. The article cited the work that Governor Ted Strickland and Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Eric Fingerhut have done to maintain funding for public higher education amid economic hardship, and their drafting of an ambitious, 10-year strategic plan that calls for linking academic programs more closely with workforce demand. The *Chronicle* also profiled several Ohio-based employers who have stayed in the state in part because of the abundance of relevant training programs and research at Ohio's community colleges and four-year institutions.

http://chronicle.com/weekly/v55/i12/12a01501.htm?utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Virginia

As part of its ongoing *Student Success Snapshot* series, the Virginia Community College System has profiled its contribution to statewide Bachelor's degree attainment. VCCS's research reveals that the system makes a vital contribution to the state's pool of four-year degree earners. In 2008, 36 percent of all Bachelor's degree recipients in Virginia had previously enrolled at one of the state's community colleges; 27 percent had earned an Associate's degree

while there. The report also profiles the population of former community college students who went on to earn a Bachelor's degree during this period. Among the findings: 69 percent were enrolled part-time, 77 percent were 22 or younger, and only 24 percent had taken a developmental education course.

www.vccs.edu/Academics/StudentSuccess/tabid/622/Default.aspx

Washington

In October, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges released *Opportunity Grants: A Progress Report on the Post Secondary Opportunity Program*. The Opportunity Grant program, established in 2006, helps low-income adults persist in higher education and earn at least 45 credits and a credential in a high-demand area. It provides funds to cover tuition, fees, books and supplies and served an estimated 3,000 students in the 2007-08 school year. The findings on the program's effectiveness are encouraging. Participating students were more likely to persist and to complete their programs than their counterparts, even when controlling for variables such as aid packages, dependency, and full-/part-time enrollment status. Among participating students who enrolled in fall 2007, 81 percent were either still enrolled or had reached their completion threshold.

www.sbctc.ctc.edu/colleged_studentachievement.aspx

RESOURCES

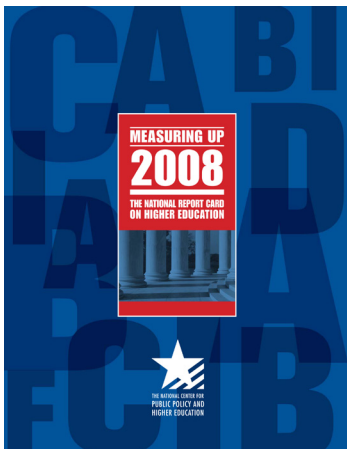
Measuring Success in Community Colleges

Associations Exploring Voluntary Standards for Community Colleges

The Association of Community College Trustees, the American Association of Community Colleges, and the College Board are working together to establish voluntary standards of success for community colleges. The organizations seek to get in front of the growing state and national pressure for stronger accountability for student outcomes in higher education. They have set in motion a two-year process for determining how to launch a voluntary effort for

community colleges that would be similar to the Voluntary Standards of Accountability process developed by the four-year sector and the Transparency by Design initiative of the adult-serving proprietary school sector. In a first meeting of an advisory group in September 2008, much of the discussion focused on how to develop and support an accurate, equitable, and transparent self-assessment for colleges given the diversity of their students' educational goals. The group discussed the pros and cons of other efforts, including the processes and metrics developed by Achieving the Dream.

http://chronicle.com/free/v55/i11/11a02201.htm?utm_source=cc&utm_medium=en



University of Alaska at Anchorage Reassesses Success Measures

Several groups that advocate for community colleges, including the Achieving the Dream Cross-State Data Work Group, have highlighted the limitations of current federal measure of student success when applied to community college students. These limitations include the three-year limit for tracking outcomes, the inclusion of outcomes for only full-time students, and a limited definition of successful outcomes that does not recognize transfer and other non-traditional goals.

The University of Alaska at Anchorage, which offers both two-year and four-year degrees, has responded to the call for a more inclusive definition of student success by creating and publicizing its own measure. Citing internal research that the current federal measure only captures 3 to 5 percent of the average incoming class of students, the university began asking students five questions:

- Did you return for a second year of study?
- Did you transfer?
- Did you graduate with a degree?
- Did you graduate with an interim degree (short of your eventual goal)?
- Are you achieving grades that put you on track to earning a degree?

The university tracks outcomes 10 years out and separately tallies how many students meet or make progress toward their educational goals over that timeframe. The next step will be to disaggregate these measures by subgroups to paint a clearer picture of student outcomes.

www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/10/22/alaska

New Edition of *Measuring Up* Report Card Released

In December, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education released its biannual *Measuring Up* report on the state of American higher education. The United States is declining on several key measures of postsecondary access and attainment. When compared with 28 peer nations, the United States now ranks seventh in the percent of young adults enrolled in college (34 percent), fifteenth in the number of credentials awarded per 100 students (18), and tenth in the percent of young adults with at least an Associate's degree (39 percent).

Measuring Up also grades states on key indicators: preparation, participation, affordability, completion, learning, and the benefits of higher education. Among the conclusions that are particularly relevant to Achieving the Dream:

- *States rated well in terms of completion.*
Thirty-one states received a "B" or higher, while only three states received a "D" or lower. (While persistence in two-year institutions and Associate's degree completion are included in this category, completion grades are not disaggregated for the two-year sector.)
- *States rated very poorly in affordability.*
Forty-nine states received an "F"; California received a "C."
- *All 50 states received "incomplete" grades on student learning* because there are no statewide data that measure student learning while in college.

<http://measuringup2008.highereducation.org>

Student Success

Likelihood of Degree Attainment Cited as Lower for Community College Students

A National Bureau of Economic Research working paper analyzes Bachelor's degree attainment of community college students. In *Do Community Colleges Provide a Viable Pathway to a Baccalaureate Degree?*, Bridget Terry Long and Michal Kurlander match community college students to similar students enrolled in four-year institutions and control for a variety of selection biases and students' educational goals. Once these factors are accounted for, students transferring from a community college are 15 percent less likely to earn a Bachelor's degree than their peers at four-year schools. Compared with other papers on the subject, the research used a large sample of more recent data (from the class of 1998) and a more generous timeframe for measuring outcomes (nine years). The report concludes with a caution against changes in policy that would increase enrollment in community colleges without corresponding changes in policy to support these institutions and help facilitate student transfer.

www.nber.org/papers/w14367



Survey Results Point to Need to Raise Expectations for Community College Students

The 2008 Community College Survey of Student Engagement provides a nuanced glimpse into how well our nation's community colleges are actively engaging their students, both within and outside of the classroom. The survey, which is overseen by Kay McClenney of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin, measures student engagement using five benchmarks of effective community college practice: active and collaborative learning; student effort; academic challenge; student-faculty interaction; and support for learners. The 2008 survey highlights that students value opportunities for engagement that are correlated with academic achievement, but they are not always able to take advantage of them. The accompanying report, *Essential Elements of Engagement: High Expectations, High Support*, underscores this point by stressing the importance of institutional expectations for student success. A special section of the report focusing on financial aid reveals that nearly half of part-time students and nearly a third of full-time students receive no aid at all, and that just over half of community college students apply for federal aid.

www.ccsse.org/survey/survey.cfm

NCSL Advises Stronger Link Between Funding and Outcomes

Big Questions, Practical Answers: New Strategies for Setting and Moving a Higher Education Agenda, a report by the National Conference of State Legislators' Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education, urges states to play a more active role in improving the return on their investment in higher education. The commission, which is comprised of 12 state legislators, recommends that states deliberately shift the focus of conversations regarding higher education from access to student success. It points to the need for states to better align academic programming and workforce needs and to restructure educational spending to promote highly efficient practices from high-achieving institutions. To send the message that student success matters, the report concludes, states must establish policy agendas that promote student outcomes and maintain a consistent legislative focus on these issues.

www.ncsl.org/print/educ/NCSLBroEnlPFR.pdf

Easing the Transition from High School to College

Responding to the challenge of ensuring that local high school graduates are prepared to succeed in college, Anoka Technical College in Minnesota is one of a growing number of schools to establish a high school on its campus. The Anoka-Hennepin Secondary Technical Education Program (STEP) is in its seventh year of serving high school juniors and seniors in a facility located on the Anoka campus. In 2007-08, STEP served more than 1,400 students. While some STEP students attend the high school full-time, most attend part-time and are co-enrolled at another nearby high school. STEP allows students to earn college credits in 20 fields of study while completing their high school degree. Research on the effectiveness of the program is promising: STEP students' grade point averages have improved as a result of enrollment, and they have earned significantly more college credits on average than their peers at nearby high schools.

www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/11/21/anoka

Developmental Education

Report Profiles Reforms in California Basic Skills Instruction

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching report, *Strengthening Pre-Collegiate Education in Community Colleges*, documents how 11 California community colleges have created better instructional methods for developmental education. The report surveys best practices among the colleges and highlights the roles of faculty, institutions, and systems in supporting these practices. It offers five core sets of recommendations:

- Make underprepared student success a core responsibility throughout the institution.
- Restructure professional development to make it more intellectually engaging and integral to the day-to-day work of the institution.
- Ensure that institutional research is focused on core teaching and learning issues.
- Encourage community colleges to play a leading role in developing appropriate measures of student learning.
- Build an infrastructure to ensure that best practices from successful colleges are disseminated to other campuses and institutionalized.

www.carnegiefoundation.org/dynamic/downloads-file_1_641.pdf



Restructured Developmental Education Gets Results in El Paso

On December 12, *Inside Higher Ed* featured the strategies the University of Texas at El Paso has used to improve success rates for students who test into developmental education. To improve both academic and financial efficiency, UTEP works outside the traditional framework of developmental education. For instance, the university offers students who place into developmental math the chance to take a six-hour math refresher and then retake the test; 56 percent of the students who pursue this option are placed in a higher course. It also has begun giving students who place into developmental English by a small margin the opportunity to enroll in college-level coursework if they simultaneously enroll in computer-aided supplemental instruction; 87 percent of students who do so pass the course. UTEP has augmented these efforts with outreach to the K-12 system to improve college readiness of entering students: it works with high schools to offer college placement tests to juniors and with the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence to align K-12 and postsecondary courses.

www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/12/12/utep

Data Systems

Data Quality Campaign Responds to Amendments on Federal Privacy Guidelines

The Data Quality Campaign, a national collaboration to encourage the use of high-quality educational data to improve student outcomes, has issued an analysis of and a response to the U.S. Department of Education's recent revisions to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The FERPA revisions, which were issued in December and take effect this month, partially address concerns that a narrow interpretation of the law, which is designed to protect individuals' privacy, can discourage states from establishing longitudinal data systems. Responding to the revisions, the Data Quality Campaign calls on the Department of Education to issue guidance, change regulations, and make an additional change to pave the way for the increased use of longitudinal data systems.

www.dataqualitycampaign.org/policy_implication/ferpa_regulations.cfm

A Framework for Effective State Data Systems From SHEEO

En Route to Seamless Statewide Education Data Systems: Addressing Five Cross-Cutting Concerns, from the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), provides a framework for how K-16 longitudinal data systems can help states ensure smooth student transitions between education sectors. Currently, nine states have K-16 data systems and 38 are in the process of building such a system. SHEEO's framework identifies five key areas for implementing such a system:

- Identify shared benefits as a foundation for cooperative work across sectors.
- Reconcile technical differences between independently created data systems.
- Assure student privacy while sharing data to foster improvement.
- Ensure effective use by key constituencies.
- Plan for long-term sustainability of state longitudinal data systems.

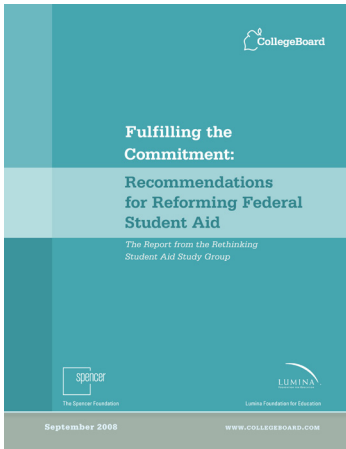
Workshop participants also agreed that the processes for mobilizing and uniting the K-12 and higher education sectors were as important at the technical details of these systems.

http://www.pdfdownload.org/pdf2html/pdf2html.php?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sheeo.org%2FSeamless_Data.pdf&images=yes

Financial Aid

Report Links Performance-Based Financial Aid to Student Success

Rewarding Persistence: Effects of a Performance-Based Scholarship Program for Low-Income Parents makes a strong case that financial aid can directly contribute to community college student success. The study, part of MDRC's Opening Doors Project, randomly assigned participants from two Louisiana community colleges to an experimental group, which received a scholarship and counseling, and a control group, which received no additional services. The scholarships, which totaled \$2,000 over two semesters, were paid in installments three times per semester in order to monitor students' academic standing and progress. To remain eligible for the benefits, students in the experimental group had to enroll at least half-time and maintain a 2.0 GPA. Among the study's findings, students receiving a



performance-based scholarship were more likely to register, more likely to enroll full-time, and more likely to persist through both their second and fourth semester.

www.mdrc.org/publications/507/overview.html

Group Proposes Financial Aid Reforms to Promote Access and Success

For the past two years, the College Board has convened a Rethinking Student Aid Study Group to redesign the federal financial aid system in a way that would improve both access and success for low- and middle-income students. In September, the group released its final report: *Fulfilling the Commitment: Recommendations for Reforming Federal Student Aid*. The report makes recommendations in four primary categories:

- *Simplify federal grant awards and tax benefits.* Specific recommendations include eliminating the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, linking Pell Grants to the consumer price index, and providing data on financial aid eligibility to all Pell-eligible families.
- *Direct loan subsidies to students who need help repaying their loans.* Specific recommendations include reconfiguring federal student loan payment procedures to include graduated and income-based payments, linking federal borrowing limits to the poverty level, and eliminating federal subsidization for student loans.
- *Help parents who can't afford to save to accumulate money for their children's education* by establishing federally supported, interest-bearing, college savings accounts for Pell-eligible families.

- *Encourage colleges to help their students succeed once they enroll and states to support federal goals.* Specific recommendations include distributing federal grants to schools that help large numbers of Pell-eligible students persist through the first year, requiring that work study programs include low- and middle-income students, and expanding need-based student aid.

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/policy-advocacy/affordability/student-aid>

Many Community College Students Never Apply for Financial Aid

Apply to Succeed: Ensuring Community College Students Benefit from Need-Based Financial Aid, a report by the U.S. Department of Education's Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, reveals that more than a third of full-time community college students never apply for federal financial aid using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, including large percentages of low-income students who are eligible for aid. Further, among the total population of students surveyed who did not apply for federal aid, 39 percent stated that they did not believe they were eligible. The committee uses this evidence to argue for better communication on financial aid eligibility, a simpler application process, and efforts to decrease the number of hours community college students must be enrolled to be eligible for aid.

www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acsfal/applytosucceed.pdf