THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE NATION’S BROAD AGENDA OF CHANGE:
CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS

The Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders 2012 Annual Meeting, “Change by Design.edu”

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THEMES

• The Need for Institutional and Instructional Transformation: Innovation and “Disruptive Innovation”

• The Need for and Approach to a New National Credentialing System

• The Impact of the Critical Need for the Alignment of Competencies, Standards, and Credentials: The Shift from Input to Outcome Performance Measures

• The Significance of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence

• The Critical Role of Business Engagement and Partnerships
BACKGROUND AND TRENDS

• National Consensus and Research on Increasing Completion and Attainment of Market Relevant Credentials

• The Shift to Outcome Performance Measures and Competencies

• The Aspen Prize for CC Excellence (Student Performance, Employment, and Learning Outcomes)

• Giving Credit Where Credit is Due: Creating a Competency-Based Qualifications Framework for Postsecondary Workforce Education and Training
  http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/Giving-Credit.pdf

• Focus on Competency Based Credentials

• USDOE Credit Hour Definition and Learning Outcomes

• New Research (CCRC)
Top 10, 2011 Community College Week Stories

1. Aspen Institute Prize
2. Solving the Great Jobs Mismatch
3. Budget Woes Hobble College Agenda
4. Uneven Progress on Completion Goal
5. Pell Grants Targeted in Congress
6. New Measures of College Success Advance (Federal Recommendations re: Graduation Rate and the AACC’s Voluntary Framework of Accountability)
7. Former GIs March to College Campuses
8. Crackdown on For-Profits Continues
9. DREAM Act: States Strike Out On Their Own
10. College Enrollment Boom Slows
DRIVING FORCES FOR INSTITUTIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

- Focus on postsecondary credential attainment goal
- Demand for increased:
  - Labor market relevance of instruction & credentials
  - Accountability for outcomes
  - Transparency for employers, students & educators
  - Acceleration of learning and flexibility
  - Scalable and cost-effective strategies
  - Portability & articulation in education
- Multi-dimensional skills shortage
- Focus on the assessment of learning
- Increased use of technology and e-learning
- Growing interest in competency-based qualifications frameworks (Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile)
• Access and CC Multiple Missions
• Existing education system
  ❖ Often focused on one style of student learning
  ❖ Funding formula patterned on attendance
• Transfer issues, including assessment of prior learning achieved through informal and formal non-credit education and training through educational and other non-collegiate providers
• Challenges to HE Credentialing System (Anya Kamenetz’s DIY U. Edpunks, Entrepreneurs, and the Coming Transformation of Higher Education)
• Linkages to real time LMI and Labor Market/Stronger Employer Engagement
• Lack of a career navigation framework (navigating through complex pathways with ladders/lattices and the educational choices
DRIVING FORCES...

IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

+ Affordability
+ Diversification of postsecondary education
+ Expansion of On-line Education/virtual learning environments
+ Increased focus on outcomes in accreditation
+ Performance-Based Funding
+ Transfer policy

IN WORKFORCE EDUCATION & TRAINING

- Career pathways to further education & employment
- Industry recognized & validated credentials
- Stackable credentials
- Modularization
- Credit/non-credit disconnect, incl. PLA
- Career navigation
- Employability (“soft”) skills
• Need for Strategic Transformation – both institutional and instructional – during Increased Accountability and Declining Resources

• The time has come for Higher Education, employers, unions, industry associations, and others concerned with the long-term economic competitiveness of the U.S. to work together to create a more coherent, flexible and efficient education system that assesses competency, rather than seat time, to measure learning
CHALLENGES TO THE CURRENT CREDENTIALING SYSTEM

• Development of a common language, standard methodology and metrics across all stakeholders regarding skills and abilities of the workforce

• Competencies (job tasks and knowledge, skills, and abilities) not consistently defined

• Proliferation of credentials (certificates, industry recognized certifications, etc.)

• Inconsistent quality assurance and validation

• Lack of transparency for employers, students and educators

• Mixed value in the labor market

• Lack of portability and articulation in education
Credentialing System in the United States
“We will never be able to clean up the general mess of the American labor market without a stronger commitment to credentials and a system of common standards that supports them. A competency based credentials system reduces employer search and transaction costs, increases worker security, and can guarantee quality work and quality jobs.”
CREDENTIALS . . . AND MAJORS/OCUPATIONS MATTER

- 43% of licenses and certificates earn more than an Associates Degree
- 27% of licenses and certificates earn more than a Baccalaureate Degree
- 31% of Associate Degrees earn more than a Baccalaureate Degree

Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce
“What is needed is a system that assesses competency to measure learning – defines curricula outcomes-knowledge, the application of acquired knowledge, reasoning capacities and skills . . . And that can be assessed regardless of where and how they are learned”

Source: Lumina Foundation

“Seat time” does not equal learning

- Learning Outcomes, Competencies and Standards matter
EMERGING INITIATIVES TOWARDS A NATIONAL CREDENTIALING SYSTEM AND FOCUS ON A COMPETENCY BASED FRAMEWORK

- Lumina Foundation Degree Qualifications Profile and “Tuning USA”
- American National Standards’ Institute
  - Principles for Federal Engagement in Standards Activities and Conformity Assessment to Address national Priorities
  - Accreditation Initiatives: Certification and Certificates
  - Personnel Certificate and Certification Information Resource Center Proposal
- Diverse Private Sector and Higher Educational Development of Multi-Layered Industry Recognized Credentials, Standards and Pathways including the MacArthur Foundation, HASTAC (and Mozilla project to create and test digital achievement badges and badge systems to recognize acquired skills and competencies)

Source: Open Badges for Lifelong Learning
“Tuning” process to define explicitly what an Associate’s, Bachelor’s and Master’s level degree represents in terms of student learning and competencies, not just a listing of courses, credits or minimum grade point averages.

Degree qualifications framework seeks to award comparable degrees across disciplines based on defined, criterion-referenced learning outcomes in 5 learning areas:
- Specialized Knowledge
- Broad/Integrative Knowledge
- Intellectual Skills
- Applied Learning
- Civic Learning
Recognize Diversity of Community Colleges

Focus on Outcome Metrics
- Completion Outcomes (student performance including transfer)
- Learning Outcomes
- Labor Market Outcomes
- Equitable Outcomes (from 3 underrepresented racial/ethnic groups and students from low-income backgrounds)

Identify and Disseminate Innovation and Best Practices
THE CRITICAL ROLE OF BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS: ADDRESSING THE DISCONNECTS

• Between employers and educators
  ❖ Different perspectives on the priorities of postsecondary education in preparing students for the workforce
  ❖ The current credentialing system is confusing to employers, institutions, labor market service providers and students
  ❖ Competencies taught must be relevant to the workplace

• Between postsecondary education, public workforce systems and other education partners
• Encourage Federal, State and Institutional Policies that Support Innovation

• Spread the message that a “college” education includes options other than a baccalaureate degree
  - Technical education (which prepares students for good paying Middle Skills jobs) is a meaningful and important option
  - Many non-baccalaureate credentials have significant labor market payoff

• Establish a limited number of linked goals
  - Link goals among workforce and economic development and education stakeholders in key measurable metrics and report performance outcomes
  - For example, X% increase in labor market validated credentials in critical industries

• Incent colleges to engage in collaboration and innovation around meeting the workforce needs of critical state sectors
  - Reward results at the strategic level (“linked goals”) as well as the institutional level
MOVING FORWARD

• Expand linkages between non-credit and credit learning
  ❖ Work at the leadership and policy level to expand these linkages
  ❖ Focus on the linkages as they result in increasing career pathways and increased credential attainment (especially for working age adults)
  ❖ Reduce institutional barriers between credit- and noncredit-bearing education

• Raise the bar for business engagement
  ❖ Promote the joint establishment of rigorous competency/standards/curricula/credentials and quality assurance mechanisms between business and education (curriculum development)
  ❖ Challenge employers to share ongoing responsibility for a competitive workforce and establishing meaningful curricula and credentials

• Increase alignment and linkages between federal, state, and local public workforce systems, AE, and educational institutions
  ❖ Ensure that curricula reflects labor market needs and that students choose the right programs and credentials
Champion the transformation of instructional delivery and professional development at the postsecondary level:

- Build “stackable” credentials and career pathways
- Accelerate learning – reduce cycle of learning
- Create multiple entry/exit points
- Increase contextual and work-based learning
- Embed industry certifications in curriculum
- Scale e-learning and technology
- Student-centered, interactive learning to include problem solving, critical thinking, systems thinking, team based learning, etc.
MOVING FORWARD

• **Create a national competency-based framework for Postsecondary Education** modeled on Lumina Foundation’s Degree Profile to establish learning outcomes for multiple levels of academic credentials (including one year certificates; it should be constructed with input from multiple participants, including education, workforce, and employer stakeholders)

• **Link data systems to** provide a more comprehensive picture of student learning outcomes and employment, and to track noncredit students as they advance through the postsecondary education system

• **Develop a National Clearinghouse for Credentials**
  • Provide standard terminology and methodologies to document the development and documentation of standards for competency based qualifications and curricula (including PL/ CTE credit transfer)
  • Create a central database to count numbers and ensure proper categorization of programs (web)
  • Recognized by federal and state governments and industry/ Accredited by third party and based on National/International Standards and Regulatory Standards