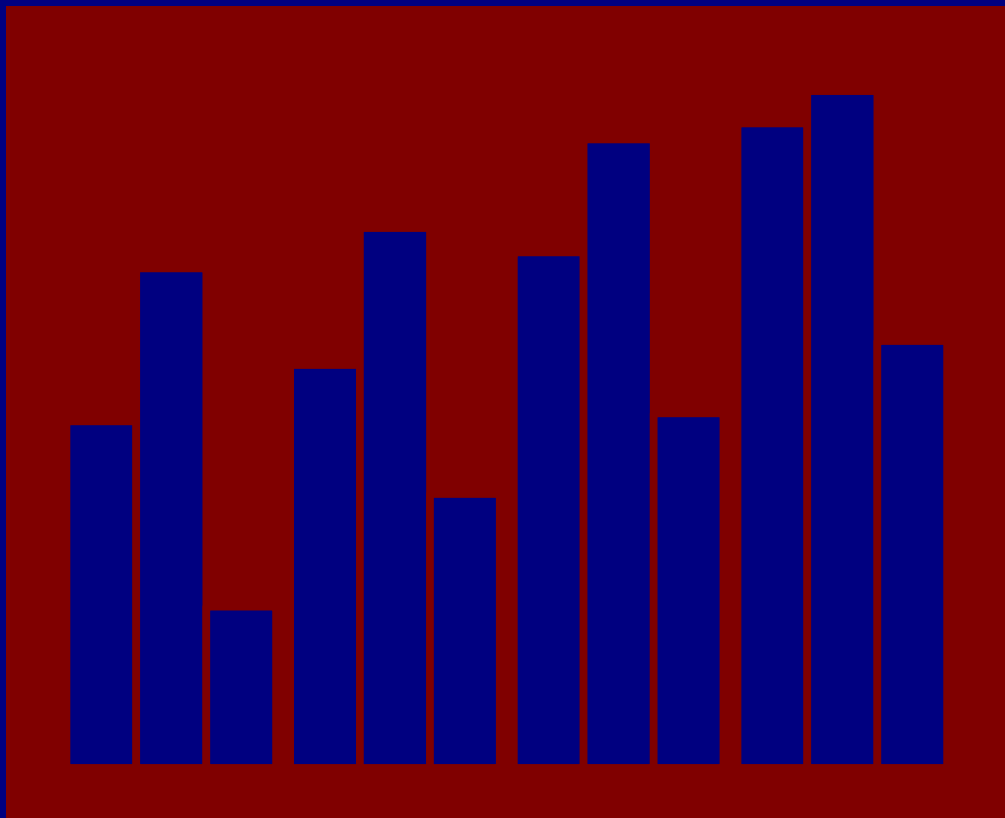


TRANSITION MATTERS

COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO BACHELOR'S DEGREE

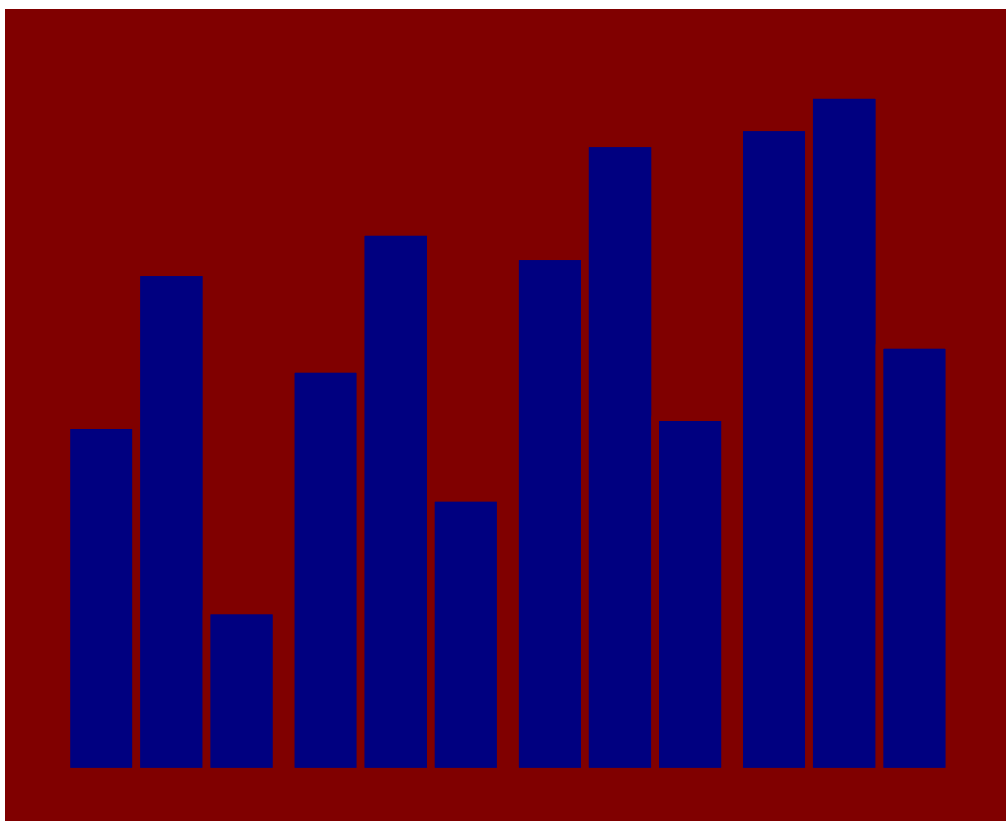


**A PROCEEDINGS REPORT OF
THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

MAY 2008

TRANSITION MATTERS

COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO BACHELOR'S DEGREE



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STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

MAY 2008

**ADVISING CONGRESS AND
THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS**

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Student Financial Assistance
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The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (Advisory Committee) is a Federal advisory committee chartered by Congress, operating under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA); 5 U.S.C., App. 2). The Advisory Committee provides advice to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education on student financial aid policy. The findings and recommendations of the Advisory Committee do not represent the views of the Agency, and this document does not represent information approved or disseminated by the Department of Education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Due to changing demographics, issues of college affordability, and workforce expectations, there is an increasing demand for access to community colleges. At present, there are approximately 1,200 community colleges nationwide, serving over 11.5 million students – nearly half of all undergraduates. These institutions have multiple missions integral to their communities, one of which includes helping students transition from a two-year college to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree.

These institutions are a primary access point to higher education for many Americans, particularly those who have been traditionally underrepresented, such as minority, first-generation, nontraditional, and low-income students. As college costs increase, community colleges are becoming a more popular entry point for students of various economic backgrounds, and more students are turning to community college for the first two years of their education, with plans to transfer to attain a bachelor's degree.

However, data from a report by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, *Mortgaging Our Future: How Financial Barriers to College Undercut America's Global Competitiveness* (2006), reveals problems en route to a bachelor's degree for college-qualified low- and moderate-income students who initially enroll at a community college with the intention of transferring to a four-year institution and attaining a bachelor's degree. Specifically, the report shows that among the 1992 high school graduate cohort, only 20 percent of college-qualified low-income students actually attained a bachelor's degree by 2000. While the number of higher income students in this same category who attained a bachelor's degree is significantly higher, the pathway is not perfect for them either, indicating the need to strengthen this route. Furthermore, new enrollment data now available suggest that a major shift in college enrollment from four-year colleges to two-year colleges occurred among low- and moderate-income college-qualified high school graduates between 1992 and 2004. These shifts portend higher projected bachelor's degree losses for the high school class of 2004 – as well as higher projected cumulative losses for the current decade.

Recognizing the need to strengthen the community college pathway, the Advisory Committee has undertaken an initiative on community colleges. Through its research, the Committee has noted three critical transition points for students who start at a community college and intend to obtain a bachelor's degree: enrollment, persistence, and transfer. Students encounter barriers at each stage that often prevent them from attaining a degree, barriers that fall into five categories: academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial. In this proceedings report, the Committee has identified and described multiple practices that reduce barriers, and, in so doing, enable enrollment, ensure persistence, and facilitate transfer.

This report details the proceedings of the Advisory Committee's Community College Symposium, held on December 10, 2007 in Washington DC. The symposium featured community college leaders who described efforts to overcome barriers. The information in this document is a valuable resource to community college leaders at all levels – federal, state, and institutional – who desire change and seek to implement strategies that enhance the community college pathway to a bachelor's degree.

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OVERVIEW

Community colleges are the primary access point to higher education for those who have been traditionally underrepresented, such as minority, first-generation, nontraditional, and low-income students (Bailey and Morest 2006). For these populations, financial barriers to college access are significant obstacles, and, increasingly, these students are turning to two-year colleges as a less expensive pathway to bachelor's degree attainment. Increasing the number of students who attain the bachelor's degree is critical to America's global competitiveness because, over the next decade, more jobs will require at least some college education or a bachelor's degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005; Uhalde et al. 2006). Therefore, strengthening the community college pathway to bachelor's degree attainment is one way to move more Americans toward economic security.

However, community colleges are the sector of higher education that is most likely to feel the impact of political and economic change. As states assess budget shortfalls, public colleges are often hit hard and costs to students are increased. Because community college fees are already low, policymakers may not hesitate to raise them as a method of meeting budget gaps. However, many low- and moderate-income students attend community colleges. These students are most sensitive to fee increases as well as to general economic hardship. Many live paycheck to paycheck, and forgoing income to earn a degree is an arduous task. In difficult economic times, such as are current, community college students may often have to choose between basic necessities and educational advancement. Even small changes to federal or state loan and grant programs can make or break the chance that a low-income student can assemble the financial resources required to enroll and persist in higher education to the completion of an associate's and then bachelor's degree.

The Advisory Committee's 2006 report, *Mortgaging Our Future: How Financial Barriers to College Undercut America's Global Competitiveness*, reports that as many as 2.4 million bachelor's degrees among college-qualified low- and moderate-income students will be lost in the current decade due to financial barriers. Recently available data updates these numbers to nearly 3.2 million (ACSFA 2008). Without question, obtaining an associate's degree en route to a bachelor's degree is a lower cost option for this population to obtain the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly complex economic environment. Maintaining this option for students will be a collective endeavor among states, postsecondary schools, secondary school systems, and the federal government. All stakeholders must consider how best to strengthen three critical transition points for those who enroll at a community college with

Strengthening the community college pathway to bachelor's degree attainment is one way to move more Americans toward economic security.

Nearly 3.2 million bachelor's degrees among college-qualified low- and moderate-income students will be lost in the current decade due to financial barriers.

the intention of eventually obtaining a bachelor's degree: how to enable enrollment, ensure persistence, and facilitate transfer.

All stakeholders must consider how best to strengthen three critical transition points for those who enroll in a community college with the intention of obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Enabling enrollment involves collaboration among states, colleges, and secondary school systems to create a better understanding of the skills required for students to be truly college-ready at both the levels of academic and informational preparedness. While community colleges must maintain open door policies as a means of maximizing the number of potential students, they must still work with states and secondary schools to ensure basic college-preparedness. In addition, outreach activities can reduce the information barriers that students often face that prevent them from understanding administrative procedures or the availability of financial aid. States should also partner with institutions to better link secondary and postsecondary education.

Ensuring persistence will require community colleges to define collectively and respond individually to measures established to guide enrolled students through the associate's degree process and onward toward transfer and bachelor's degree attainment. Schools should develop these measures not just to track student persistence, but to evaluate enrollment and transfer as well, keeping in mind the complexity of community college student populations who often face conflicting responsibilities while enrolled. Aligning curriculum and standards between K-12 and higher education, as well as targeting developmental education resources are two steps states and institutions can take to prepare students for the rigors of postsecondary education. Underlying all of these efforts should be clear public goals at the state level to support student persistence.

Enabling enrollment, ensuring persistence, and facilitating transfer are the necessary steps to improve this pathway.

Facilitating transfer requires that colleges and states look back at the collaborative and evaluation mechanisms that promote enrollment and persistence in order to apply them to the next leap students must take. For instance, understanding the skills required for basic college-readiness encourages dialogue to begin an articulation or support services discussion. Measurements that ensure persistence can be extended to encourage further educational attainment, information that can be shared with four-year college administrators. Building partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions that allow seamless transfer is an overarching goal of increasing bachelor's degree attainment levels. And, as with persistence, public goals to increase transfer as a means of improving employment rates and quality of life should be a priority of the states.

Community colleges have been responsive to these concerns and already are taking steps to better serve and enable more students to move toward completion of an associate's degree and transfer to a four-year institution.

To provide support to community colleges in their efforts, the Advisory Committee has reviewed and analyzed the numerous obstacles students and institutions report that impede progress toward enrollment, persistence, and transfer. These barriers fall into five categories: academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial.

At the Committee's Community College Symposium, held on December 10, 2007 in Washington DC, representatives from a broad cross-section of community colleges shared their efforts to address these barriers and move students toward professional and economic success. As all three sessions of the symposium show, community colleges represent a diverse constituency of students, many whom begin their educational pathway there with plans to transfer and attain a bachelor's degree. Now is the time to muster resources and align standards so that students may achieve their dreams.

Barriers to student enrollment, persistence, and transfer fall into five categories – academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial.

ENABLING ENROLLMENT

Background

As demand for higher education has risen, enrollment at community colleges has dramatically increased—five-fold since 1965 (NCES 2002)—and is expected to continue rising. By 2015, enrollment could increase by as much as 46 percent beyond the level of enrollment in 2000 (Martinez 2004). In addition, the number of low-income, minority, first-generation, non-native English speakers, and adult students expected to enroll in community college will continue rising (McClenney 2004).

Community colleges feel significant pressure to effectively meet this demand, and remain committed to their open door policies that provide access to all students. However, increased enrollment has also come at a time of decreased funding for enrollment-related resources such as outreach and counseling, number of class offerings, and tuition subsidies. All of these factors can negatively impact students' ability to enroll (Bailey and Morest 2006). Specifically, when decreased funding results in increased tuition, students are directly affected. For example, in 2003-04, at least 250,000 potential college students did not enroll in higher education due to reduced state funding and increased tuition levels (The National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education 2004).

Despite decreased funding, community colleges continue to assist students who are considering, approaching, and moving through this higher education entry point. However, these institutions face numerous enrollment-related challenges as a result of their multiple missions and varied range of students. Some of these challenges include helping students understand the benefits of a community college education, the availability of financial aid and how to apply, the purpose and need for developmental courses, the enrollment process, and enrollment services for nontraditional students (Giegerich 2006).

Maximizing the potential of an open door policy means analyzing the barriers to enrollment that prospective students face. These barriers fall into five major categories—academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial—all with particular ramifications for community college students. As state systems work through enrollment issues, they must come to understand the effects of these enrollment barriers on prospective students.

Community colleges feel significant pressure to meet increasing enrollment demands.

Community colleges remain committed to their open door policies despite multiple missions and a varied range of students.

Main Barriers

Students who do not have specific career or degree plans find enrollment a more tenuous prospect.

Academic. Inconsistent academic standards in secondary education leave many students thinking they are prepared for college, only to start the enrollment process and discover they are in need of remediation. In the fall of 2000, 42 percent of entering community college students took at least one remedial course (U.S. Department of Education 2003). This is partially a result of a lack of standard course requirements that align secondary and postsecondary institutions (Pathways to College Network 2007a). Although many states are in the process of aligning high school standards with college expectations, only nineteen states currently have aligned standards in place (Achieve 2008).

Additionally, students who do not have specific career or degree plans find enrollment a more tenuous prospect as they lack direction and, possibly, the motivation to enroll. If such students decide to enroll, they may feel uncertain as they navigate the enrollment process in terms of course registration and how to proceed generally (Rosenbaum et al. 2006).

Social. Many students do not know others who are college-bound. They also lack encouragement from their families, teachers, colleagues, and community members and do not receive educational guidance or mentoring. As a result, they are less likely to enroll (Pathways to College Network 2007b). Even college-qualified low-income, first generation, and other underserved students are more likely to lack such supports and are at greater risk (Choy 2002; Bailey and Morest 2006). These students need people in their lives who encourage them to aspire to college, expect them to enroll, and assist them with the preparation process (Bedsworth et al. 2006).

Students often have family and work-related responsibilities that restrict their ability to enroll.

In addition, students often have competing obligations, such as family and work-related responsibilities, that restrict their ability to enroll. They may be the primary income earner for the extended family, or may be working or single parents. For example, 27 percent of full-time and 50 percent of part-time students work 40 hours a week or more, and 17 percent of students are single parents (AACC 2008).

Informational. Many students lack information about college preparation and benefits, the admissions process, and what to expect from college (Vargas 2004). But students who receive information on preparing for college are more likely to enroll than students who do not (King 1996). Unfortunately, low-income and other underserved students are less likely to obtain information about college, and without such guidance are less likely to enroll (Pathways to College Network 2004).

Traditional students rely on their schools and communities to provide information on college, but public high schools, on average, offer one guidance counselor for every 300 students (NCES 2003). This places the low-income student at an even greater disadvantage. Nontraditional students have even fewer options for obtaining information about college, relying more heavily on admissions, financial aid, and other student services at a community college. Due to a lack of funding, such services are often understaffed (Bailey and Morest 2006).

Complexity. As a result of a lack of guidance on college-enrollment processes, students can make mistakes or incorrect choices regarding courses, major, enrollment status, and need for financial assistance (Rosenbaum et al. 2006). Academic catalogs and course requirements may be confusing and offices may be difficult to locate. Steps to complete enrollment, registration, and financial aid requirements may be drawn-out and complicated (Rosenbaum et al. 2006).

This lack of clarity can overwhelm or frustrate students and hinder their ability to enroll. A recent study comparing public community colleges to private occupational two-year colleges found that occupational colleges took extra measures to reduce complexity in and assist students with administrative processes and procedures. Not surprisingly, students at occupational colleges had greater enrollment success and did not encounter the problems related to complexity that students at public community colleges experienced (Rosenbaum et al. 2006).

Financial. Students often encounter difficulty paying tuition, fees, and related educational and living expenses. Many work to cover such expenses, yet, by doing so, they often become ineligible for state and federal aid due to increased income (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance 2005). Borrowing funds may be necessary if state and federal grant aid is insufficient; however, low-income and minority students in particular are averse to taking out loans to pay for education (ECMC Group Foundation 2003; Price 2004).

On the other hand, many students do not even apply for aid and fail to take advantage of funds available to them (King 2006). Community college students who do fill out the FAFSA often apply just before or after the start of the academic term. These late applications may cause students to miss state deadlines for financial aid in some states or arrive after available aid has been distributed (Zumeta and Frankle 2007; Kirshstein and Rhodes 2001). Late applicants may not receive their funds until several weeks into the term due to the time required for processing and disbursement.

Nontraditional students have few options for obtaining information about college.

Students often encounter difficulty paying tuition, fees, and related educational and living expenses.

Panelist Testimony

Each of the panelists represents a college that is developing innovative enrollment measures at the state and institutional levels.

Session one panelists discussed the enrollment barriers described above in the context of a climate in which community colleges serve as a gateway to higher education. The challenge of increasing such opportunity is commensurate with addressing the needs of underprepared students and the other barriers to enrollment that low-income students, in particular, face. Each of the panelists represents a college that is developing innovative measures at the state or institutional level that have been successful in increasing the number of enrollments while maintaining an open door policy. Panelists explained how various efforts—marketing campaigns, personal outreach to local high schools, and targeted high school-to-college transition programs—might serve as models for other states and institutions.

The session was moderated by Chairperson Judith Flink. Prior to the panelist testimony, a representative of Congressman Rubén Hinojosa provided remarks on the importance of community colleges to the national economy and steps that Congress has taken that benefit community college students.

Ms. Moira Lenehan Razzuri
Legislative Assistant
Congressman Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
Guest Speaker

Congressman Hinojosa is a true believer in the importance and value of community colleges.

Ms. Moira Lenehan Razzuri serves as Legislative Assistant to Congressman Rubén Hinojosa and is the Congressman’s liaison on all education and workforce issues for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor. Ms. Lenehan Razzuri provided remarks on behalf of Congressman Hinojosa.

Testimony. Thank you and good morning on behalf of Congressman Hinojosa. I’d like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to visit with you this morning and participate in this first panel. Congressman Hinojosa is a true believer in the importance and the value of community colleges. He, as some of you may know, is the founding chair of South Texas Community College, which is now South Texas College. It was founded in 1994 and opened its doors to about 800 students. The college now enrolls about 18,000 students. Over the course of the growth of South Texas Community College, our region has also seen a precipitous drop in the unemployment rate, from over 20 percent at the time of its founding to less than six percent today. The Congressman credits that

expansion of opportunity provided to our region to our community college and our boarder universities.

The five barriers to access and persistence and completion are the same whether you are enrolling at a community college for the first time or trying to transfer from a community college to a four-year college. The power of college-knowledge, social supports, and academic and financial preparation for those transitions is critical.

I wanted to take a few minutes to share with you some of the work that the Committee on Education and Labor has been doing to address these issues. First, the College Cost Reduction and Access Act provides an increase in student financial aid that is of critical importance to community college students and all students across the country. But this law also makes a significant investment in minority-serving institutions, most of which are community colleges. I'd like to highlight in particular the investment in Hispanic-serving institutions and the priority for that funding. The Hispanic-serving institutions' funding prioritizes producing more graduates in the STEM careers, and also emphasizes articulation and transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions in those STEM fields. We see this as a real opportunity to accelerate the development of successful models in high-need fields that will move students from two-year schools to four-year schools. And as that movement occurs, our transfer students will be qualified for the SMART grant as they make the transition, so they will have some financial resources waiting for them at the four-year institution.

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act provides an increase in student financial aid that is of critical importance to community college students.

As you know, the Education and Labor Committee recently reported out H.R. 4137, The College Opportunity and Affordability Act, and, again, as you look through this large bill, many of the provisions recognize and highlight the importance of community colleges and look for ways to provide support to community colleges in fulfilling their missions. Again, you'll notice there's a great expansion in the programs for minority-serving institutions, a formal authorization of predominantly black institutions, Asian- and Pacific Islander-serving institutions, and non-tribal Native American-serving institutions. Again, many of those institutions are community colleges. There is an expanded role and a highlighting of community colleges as partners in teacher preparation programs, and I think this is a very, very important area. Our teaching workforce does not reflect our classrooms, and community colleges are in a very good position to help us correct that disparity.

The House HEA reauthorization bill highlights the importance of community colleges.

We've also focused on articulation and transfer. The College Partnerships grants program is specifically dedicated to that. In addition, the high school equivalency and college assistance migrant programs have a new provision that will look at college assistance migrant programs awarded to

two-year colleges and measure their success in preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges.

There are provisions to expand the transparency and transfer of credit and articulation policies. Again, students need to know how the process works, how the system works, and what is going to count towards their degree as they try to make that move from a two-year to a four-year institution. A program called Jobs to Careers looks at developmental programs and occupational certificate programs and ways to articulate these with degree-granting programs so that we can bring real meaning to life-long learning. There is also a program for rural development grants that examines the challenges facing our rural colleges and rural communities. Community colleges are critical partners in providing access in those areas.

The House HEA bill also includes provisions to support life-long learning and rural development grants for colleges.

In closing, I would like to express the Congressman's interest and commitment to these issues and his appreciation for being able to participate. We are looking forward to hearing the panelists this morning. Thank you.

Ms. Melissa Gregory
College Director of Student Financial Aid
Montgomery College

Ms. Gregory discussed her outreach efforts to Maryland area high schools and the local community to help students prepare for community college and better understand the financial aid application process. These efforts include an initiative to increase the number of low-income students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in time to receive state grants, as well as *You Can Afford College*, a televised event in Maryland during which student and parent questions about financial aid are answered.

Maryland's community colleges are helping to ensure that more low-income students receive financial aid.

Testimony. I am the College Director of Student Financial Aid at Montgomery College (MC). MC is a multi-campus community college in Montgomery County, Maryland, just outside Washington DC. Each year we serve approximately 32,000 credit students on our three campuses and approximately 30,000 workforce development continuing education students at several locations around the county.

This morning I am going to focus on the work of the Maryland community colleges in providing outreach activities to low-income students, our project to increase the number of low-income students receiving federal

and state financial aid, some specific outreach initiatives at Montgomery College, and the challenges we face in trying to do it all.

In 2001, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) issued the report “Access and Affordability: Refocusing Financial Aid in Maryland.” The report reviewed the state’s financial aid programs and made recommendations for improvement. Our community colleges were disappointed to discover that although approximately one-half of the state’s Pell-eligible students enrolled in Maryland schools were attending a community college, community college students were receiving only eight percent of the state’s need-based grant dollars. And virtually all of the community college state grant recipients were low-income Pell grant recipients. The state funding formula emphasized school choice over access, and cost of attendance over income. Some students at the lowest cost community colleges could not qualify for state need-based grants because the school tuition was too low.

A 2001 report showed that most community college students were not receiving state need-based aid.

We were floored and, really, very embarrassed. We couldn’t figure out what was wrong. Why weren’t our students receiving state grants? We have an established history of outreach to the communities we serve. We tried to determine, do we need a different approach? What can we do differently?

There were three issues that were very clear. First of all, the state’s deadline to apply for need-based grants is March 1st and that works for traditional four-year college students, but it does not work for community college students. Second, state grants were for full-time students, and many community college students are part-time. And third, the state grant eligibility formula allows higher income students attending four-year Maryland schools to receive state grants, while many Pell-eligible community college students could not receive grants.

Community colleges sought to get more students to complete the FAFSA.

As a result of the 2001 report, the state legislature and MHEC have been very responsive to the needs of community college students. There were several approaches to providing funding equity, including new decentralized grant programs that favored community colleges: schools with a high percentage of Pell Grant enrollees, a targeted grant program for part-time students, and changes for the state grant eligibility formula that increased awards for commuter students. Hurdles still remained. Although discussions continue, the March 1st deadline to apply for need-based state grants has not changed.

The community colleges decided to draft an early awareness action plan. To clarify our plan to address the inequities in funding, the Maryland Community College Financial Aid Directors Affinity Group developed a learning outcomes project promoting the goal of a self-directed learner.

Our goal was to get more community college-bound students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is used for state grants, by the March 1st deadline. This would maximize the aid resources for our students and minimize some of our headaches with last minute, “day before school starts,” FAFSAs. It also smoothes the way for transfer students because they must adapt to the earlier application deadlines of four-year schools to transfer successfully.

The key to our plan is outreach. We looked at methods to step up or modify our outreach programs. We want to inform the public about financial aid programs and processes, and we also want to help students obtain more funding. At my school, a full-time Pell Grant recipient should receive approximately \$2,000 - \$3,000 in state grant funds. That amount of money goes a long way at a community college. Not every low-income Pell Grant recipient receives the maximum Pell, and students who cannot cover at least tuition, fees, and books (and maybe gas and bus money) may not enroll in college at all.

Our strategy includes workshops at elementary and middle schools that promote early awareness; hands-on FAFSA workshops at high schools; and information sharing through community groups, churches, and social service agencies. Community colleges themselves determine the most effective method of identifying and reaching the groups in their counties. For example, in Montgomery County we work closely with the college and career coordinator at each high school. We set up financial aid nights at the high schools, keep the coordinators informed of financial aid changes, and work with them on individual student cases. The school system maintains its own financial aid web page, and our financial aid nights are listed along with other announcements about financial aid. MC sends a newsletter to all public high school students twice a year with information on applying to and paying for college.

Maintaining a close relationship with local schools has been very effective in reinforcing the availability of the community college financial aid administrator as an information resource. We sponsor high school guidance counselor workshops each December to provide updates on the FAFSA, state programs, and federal financial aid. Many high school counselors hear about programs such as the Academic Competitiveness Grant and SMART grant for the first time through one of our workshops. Almost every Maryland county hosts a College Goal Sunday event, and community college financial aid directors coordinate most of the sites. College Goal Sunday is a nationwide program to bring low-income families together with financial aid volunteers who help them complete the FAFSA. Many sites have Internet access, so families can complete their FAFSA on the Web at the event. The Maryland event is usually scheduled for the second Sunday afternoon in February. MC has coordinated the

Outreach strategies include early awareness and FAFSA workshops and information sharing through various community groups.

Working with the local schools and community has been effective in meeting the needs of low-income families.

Montgomery County site at Wheaton high school for the past five years, and it has been the best-attended site in the state. The event attracts between 200 and 300 people each year. We work with the public school system to choose a location that best serves the low-income population. Families from all over the county attend. Between 40 and 45 people volunteer each year, including translators of Spanish, French, Russian, Farsi, and Chinese. And if you know Montgomery County, you know that we need that. These translators are not hired; members of my staff speak all of those languages. The Lambda Delta chapter of the Lambda Theta Alpha sorority has adopted our College Goal Sunday event as a community service project and provides Spanish language translators. Language diversity is a plus at an event such as this in order to communicate directly with parents whose second language is English.

The event is widely advertised, much of it donated or provided at reduced cost by local TV stations, newspapers, and cable providers. MC sends announcement postcards in English and Spanish to all of the high school seniors whose schools are near the event. Postcards may seem a little old-fashioned, but our feedback indicates that many families stick the postcard on the refrigerator so they won't forget the event, and you cannot do that with an email!

Community colleges kick off a "Financial Aid Awareness Week" with College Goal Sunday. We host FAFSA workshops for the community on our campuses, and each school uses different methods to spread word of the event. Some use direct mailings and email, and one school has candy bars with a wrapper that says, "Don't forget – file the FAFSA by March 1st." Anything you can do to get their attention.

Another long-running event in Maryland is "You Can Afford College." This began as a radio show and moved to television with the sponsorship of Maryland Public TV (MPT). On a Saturday in January, financial aid volunteers man phone lines at MPT to answer questions from families as part of a TV show about financial aid. It is free, it is completely anonymous, and we hear from a variety of families all over the state.

So what were the results of the community college outreach project? Over a three-year period, the number of applications filed by March 1st increased 26 percent and the number of web applications increased 7.6 percent. (At most of our schools, over 90 percent of applications are from web filers.) The greater numbers of "on-time" applications combined with new aid programs increased state grant support for community college students from 8 percent to 15 percent over three years. The percentage of community college students receiving state grants increased 5 percent in three years.

The community colleges hold a Financial Aid Awareness Week that begins with College Goal Sunday.

Due to outreach efforts, the number of financial aid applications filed on time has increased 26 percent.

All of this is good, but we can do better. Our next step is to track Pell-eligible students who apply for financial aid by March 1. A more detailed analysis of our results shows we are reaching that population, but we need to increase their numbers.

Casting a wide net helped us connect with many new college-bound students from all income backgrounds. We found there are particular keys to outreach success with low-income families, as follows.

Casting a wide net helped reach many new college-bound students from all backgrounds.

- **Reach them where they are.** Research your region, determine which locations and venues work best, and make it easy for families to access your program. For example, we pick sites for College Goal Sunday that are convenient to public transportation or have free parking.
- **Choose times and days that work best for families, rather than what works best for financial aid staff.** Sunday afternoons best served our county population. When we were snowed out two years ago, we rescheduled our Montgomery County event for a Wednesday evening. The attendance was good, but not as strong as in previous years. Parents called in to say that weeknights are not good because they work a second job then. Sunday afternoon is the only time off during the week.
- **Keep it simple.** The FAFSA can be complicated, but our job is to break it down and make it accessible. Empower families to take charge of the process, rather than leaving them discouraged.
- **Demonstrate online whenever possible.** Families who are walked through FAFSA on the web and other web resources may be encouraged to try it on their own next time.
- **Follow-up with families by giving them resource names and phone numbers to contact after your event.** I tell families they can always call our office for help, regardless of where they plan to go to school. We know that over half of these kids will attend schools in the county, so we might as well help them up front.
- **Team up with other groups that help students apply to college, such as local TRIO programs.** MC has two TRIO programs, and staff members regularly volunteer at College Goal Sunday and other events. Due to our partnership, I feel confident referring families to TRIO services.

Keys to outreach success include simplicity, follow-up, partnerships, and making access to staff and events easy.

Despite our best efforts, many challenges exist to communicating information about the financial aid process. Here are my top five.

- **The first one is the FAFSA—the income dragnet.** We try to make it sound simple, but once I get to the income section in a presentation, I lose half my audience. Did you file a 1040, but could have filed the 1040EZ? They don't know. Worksheets A, B, and C are a maze, and do not apply to the majority of low-income applicants. Because many questions on the FAFSA do not affect eligibility for federal aid, I am always explaining that an item may need to be completed for other purposes and programs. This system is designed to keep wealthier families from receiving need-based aid; it was not designed to facilitate the process for low-income families. It ends up keeping low-income families out of the process even before verification is addressed.
- **Second, there are too many families and not enough financial aid staff.** Most of the families I meet at workshops want personal financial aid counseling; however, even the one-on-one help at College Goal Sunday is relatively quick. The most frequent comment at that event is, “Wow, you should offer this every Sunday in January and February!” It is not easy to get together 40 financial aid volunteers on a single Sunday.
- **Third, balancing the competing demands of the work is difficult.** Community colleges are doing wonderful financial aid outreach, but they also have financial aid offices to run, applications to verify, awards to make, loans to process, aid to disburse, audits to conduct, and reports to run. At some point, outreach efforts must be balanced with the immediate needs of enrolled students.
- **Staff presentation skills present a fourth challenge.** Some financial aid counselors are excellent personal advisors, but freeze up in front of a group of one hundred. Know the skills of your staff and use them to your best advantage. At MC, we had a desperate need for a financial aid outreach counselor fluent in Spanish. Interviewees were asked to conduct a short financial aid presentation for the search committee in both English and Spanish. We were not evaluating their fluency; we were evaluating their presentation skills.
- **The fifth challenge is finding the adult student.** High school seniors and their parents are a captive audience, but where is the best place to find the adult student who wants to return to school, complete a job-training program, or, perhaps, attend college for the first time? We find some adult learners through our existing programs. Our elementary and middle school early awareness programs have the unexpected benefit of appealing to parents considering community college.

Challenges include the complexity of the FAFSA, staff skills, and the number of families who need assistance.

Helping low-income families to access higher education is one of the best services the community colleges offer.

Two weeks ago, a colleague, after conducting four high school financial aid workshops in one week, told me that you could work from dawn to dusk, weekdays and weekends, and you cannot reach everyone. But we continue to try. The community college mission is to serve the community; helping low-income families to access higher education is one of the best services we offer. We have done a lot more in Maryland, and all of our reports are available on the MHEC website. Thank you very much.

The *I Can Afford College* campaign informs students about paying for college through television, radio, and print announcements.

Ms. Linda Michalowski
Vice Chancellor
Student Services and Special Programs
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Ms. Michalowski discussed an initiative of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the *I Can Afford College* public awareness campaign. She explained how the campaign better informs students about paying for college through television, radio, and print announcements. These efforts are intended to increase the number of students who enroll in and apply for financial aid at California Community Colleges.

Testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the California Community Colleges *I Can Afford College* financial aid awareness campaign, which is in its fourth year. Our effort is the product of one of California's budget crises: in 2003-04, the community college system's budget was cut and fees were raised by 64 percent. That was the first of two years of double digit fee increases, the product of a political stalemate between those who wanted a high fee increase and those who argued for a lesser fee increase. The end compromise put additional money into financial aid administrative capacity and awareness. There was recognition that our financial aid offices were severely understaffed, and if more money were not placed into financial aid processing and outreach, the enrollment of low-income students would be severely impacted. Additional funding of \$38 million was set aside to meet this need, 90 percent of which was sent to campuses and 10 percent of which was set aside for a statewide financial aid awareness campaign.

The campaign targets low-income students aged 16 to 24 and low-income adults.

The purpose of the campaign is to communicate that community colleges remain affordable, that financial aid is available to cover enrollment fees and other costs, and that financial aid information and application assistance is available through local community college financial aid offices. Our primary target audience consists of low-income household members aged 16 to 24. Our secondary target consists of low-income adults who are low-wage earners and frequent job changers. And the third

consists of those who influence the decisions made by the primary and secondary audiences, including parents, teachers, counselors, and community opinion leaders.

Our message strategy was to choose something simple and straightforward that everyone could understand. Our primary message is: “Go to college. We’ll pay for it.” We designed a website called ICanAffordCollege.com, the name of which reinforces the primary message. It was essential that we have a website because the campaign’s emphasis is on students’ ability to obtain one-on-one assistance from a community college financial aid office. In fact, the California budget act language that created this program required us to include the address and phone number of a financial aid office in every ad produced. In a state with 109 community colleges, 28 in the Los Angeles media market alone, that was an impossible task. So, on the website, individuals can enter their zip code and receive a list of community colleges within 25 miles, including the addresses and phone numbers of financial aid offices. The site is 99 percent bilingual in both English and Spanish.

The primary message is: “Go to college. We’ll pay for it.”

With a budget of \$3.8 million in the first year and \$2.8 million in subsequent years, we have been able to buy some media. We are currently buying in 14 media markets throughout the state, and we run four to five flights per year of two to four weeks each. Television is a powerful medium, but very expensive in California, so we have been limited to one flight each year on television and use radio heavily.

I am going to show you three of the television ads that we have run. Our first ad was called “Decision” and was intended to motivate a high school audience, primarily low-income students who have a general absence of purpose and hope for the future. It was done in a gritty MTV-type style, and it tested extremely well among the target audience.

The website connects students to their local community college financial aid office.

[Commercial plays. With music in the background, the commercial shows the fire escape of an apartment building, brick walls with graffiti, a young woman holding a crying baby, two young women standing outside, a young waitress cleaning a table and looking out the window, city traffic, two young people sitting on the steps of a decrepit house, and a young man leaning against a wall reading a brochure that says, “Go to college. We’ll pay for it.” Then the words, “Go to college. We’ll pay for it,” are put up on the screen, followed by, “Financial Aid is available at California Community Colleges” and “icanaffordcollege.com.”]

[This commercial and the following commercials can be seen at <http://www.icanaffordcollege.com/index.cfm?navId=21>.]

Our next ad took a quite different approach. It was designed for a slightly older audience.

Spanish ads are produced for older Latinos because younger Latinos prefer to receive information in English.

[Commercial entitled “I Can” plays. The following sequence shows a professor and student working a math problem at a chalk board, a science class in session, students studying in a library, and students walking around campus. A narrator's voiceover asks: “Going to college is more important today than ever before. But with all the rising costs, who can afford it?” During the scene that shows students walking around campus, one young woman says, “I can.” An older Hispanic woman says, “I can.” A young African American man says, “I can.” The commercial shows a young woman looking at a brochure that says on the cover, “Go to college. We’ll pay for it.” A second narrator then says, “Financial aid is available at California Community Colleges. To find out more, log onto 'icanaffordcollege.com' or call 1-800-987-ICAN.” The scene reverts to students walking around campus. The first narrator says, “Who can afford college? You can.”]

The third ad I want to show you is our Spanish language television ad. It was designed for an older audience because we understand that younger Latinos prefer to receive information in English. The ad features a young couple with a small child and shows the father coming home after working all night. The mom is getting ready for work and asks him if he has to work his two jobs again. He says, “yes.” She laments that she and her daughter hardly ever get to see him. Then the voice-over indicates that going to community college is a way to get a better life.

[Commercial entitled “Do Something” plays. Commercial shows a young woman in a kitchen, taking care of a small child in a high chair. A young man is just waking up and comes into the kitchen. Dialogue begins as the man and woman have a conversation in the kitchen. He is tired. She is supportive, but frustrated. A voice emerges that tells how to afford college. Then a screen appears that shows “California Community Colleges. 800.987.4226. icanaffordcollege.com.”]

The campaign has received significant donations for radio advertisements.

Significant donations and support have come from Clear Channel radio, which owns most of the most popular stations to which our target population listens. This has enabled us to stretch our media dollars and also allowed us to spice up the campaign with things that appeal to a younger audience, such as our Free Ride to College Challenge. This was a drawing that gave away a 2006 Scion as well as \$2,000 for books and supplies. When we pulled the winner, she turned out to be one of our students. When she was notified, she was ecstatic. She said her car had just broken down the week before, and she did not know how she was going to be able to keep going to school. So we may have saved a drop-out there.

This was our most recent promotion.

[Radio ad entitled “American Idol with Ryan Seacrest” plays. Ad says “Ryan Seacrest for California Community Colleges. You know, the ticket to your future begins with going to college and your local community college can help. Check out icanaffordcollege.com. Find out how you can get financial aid to help with fees, books, supplies, and even rent. Go to icanaffordcollege.com and get started on your dream today.” Then a different voice emerges that says, “Dream big. That’s what American Idol contestants are doing and that’s what you should do with your college dreams. Visit icanaffordcollege.com and enter to win a trip for two to an American Idol concert anywhere in the U.S. Details are at icanaffordcollege.com.”]

This is the last ad that I’m going to show you. “15 Seconds of Fame” was a promotion that really tried to build on the YouTube culture. Radio DJs throughout the state invited listeners to submit a 15-second video about why they needed money for college. Once we selected 10 finalists, those were posted on our website. DJs drove people to the web to vote for their favorite. The winning video was shown on the Jumbotron at Wango Tango, an annual LA concert. The winner also received a \$5,000 scholarship. This was the winning video.

[Commercial plays. This is a black and white silent film with music in the background. A young man approaches a man behind a table with a sign that says “College” next to it. The young man is about to go past the table, but the older man stops him and signals that the young man needs money. The young man checks his pockets and pulls them inside out, but they are empty. The older man wags his finger at the young man to signal that he cannot come in. In the meantime, another young man walks up to the table, hands the older man a wad of cash and is allowed to pass by the table. The first young man is frustrated and sits down on the ground, as if to give up. He takes off his hat, puts it down and wipes off his head. Another person walks by and drops some change into the hat. The young man looks up and smiles. (Note: This ad is not available on the website.)]

The campaign has had to rely heavily on media relations and no-cost and low-cost outreach. One of our key activities is Financial Aid Awareness Month, which occurs each May, and is co-sponsored by the *I Can Afford College* campaign and the community college financial aid professional association. I thought our financial aid deadline problems were uniquely Californian, but after listening to Melissa Gregory’s presentation, I am not so sure. The Cal Grant program has a March 2nd application deadline, and the Student Aid Commission has been successful in promoting that deadline such that people would say you cannot get financial aid after March 2nd. For community colleges, that represents an enormous problem

Financial Aid Awareness Week is a joint effort with community college financial aid officers to reach students.

Many community college students miss the Cal Grant March deadline as they make their enrollment decision after the deadline.

because most of our students who enroll in the fall make their enrollment decisions well after that deadline has passed.

The idea of May as Financial Aid Awareness Month was conceived in order to re-message and say, “It’s not too late to apply for financial aid.” Increasingly, we have been using the phrase, “Financial aid is available year-round at your California Community Colleges.” We did a statewide kick-off just this past May at which Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issued a California Community Colleges Financial Aid Awareness Month proclamation and about which Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez spoke at our press conference. Throughout the course of the month, many financial aid offices hold financial aid presentations. Last year, 92 of the 109 colleges had informational presentations.

There has been a 20 percent increase in aid applications and awards due to statewide efforts and campus funding.

Our public relations contractor in Sacramento works to pitch news stories throughout the year and throughout the state. When we have an interview opportunity, we contact area colleges to identify financial aid staff and students who can do the interview and tell their stories. We do some minimal media training, usually over the telephone, and then they are ready to go. We have done dozens of interviews in English and Spanish and a few in Russian and Farsi.

This year, we tried something new: high school college fairs. We have done about 15 around the state. Again, the radio stations have helped by setting up a table at the school, usually at lunch time. It generates a lot of excitement and gets the kids out there. Our campaign staff helps to set up tables. That’s been quite successful.

The campaign is developing targeted outreach to support foster youth, the military, and low-wage earner adults.

When we try to assess the impact that the campaign has had, we note that nearly 1.5 million unique visitors have been to the *I Can Afford College* website. In a recent telephone survey with our target market, 50 percent of respondents had heard something about financial aid for community colleges within the past year, and 91 percent specifically recalled campaign messages. The real measure is in the financial aid office where we have had a 20 percent overall increase in aid applications and awards as a result of both the statewide effort and the campus funding. That is 119,000 more California Community Colleges receiving financial aid. In 2005, the system was required to prepare a report for the legislature assessing the impact of two years of double digit fee increases. The bad news was that 200,000 students had been lost from the system. But when we performed a zip code analysis, we found that there was not a disproportionate impact on the lowest income students.

As we move forward, we intend to continue what has been working. In addition, we are developing targeted outreach to support specific populations. This includes support for our foster youth success initiative,

the Governor’s Troops to College initiative, and adults in the low-wage workforce. The latter is where disproportionate losses of students have been. In addition, we are in the process of producing a photo-novella, which is a very popular source of information in Latino households; expanding our partnerships with the private sector; and adding information in six additional languages.

We face a huge challenge, however, because the state campaign is useless without the ability of financial aid offices to do local outreach, process more applications, and provide the one-on-one assistance that the state campaign promises. The funds for our financial aid offices have never been increased since their initial allocation four years ago, so we are finding that the ability of the aid offices to sustain staffing levels and to do outreach is limited. So we have put in a request for growth funding; however, California is in another deficit year.

I would like to think that the campaign helps keep everyone honest. We say to people all over the state, “Go to the financial aid office. You’ll get free one-on-one assistance.” We have work to do with our financial aid offices to make sure that materializes. Our financial aid offices delivered \$1.17 billion in aid to more than 700,000 community college students two years ago. Almost one-third of our full-time students received Pell Grants and more than one-half received state fee waivers. We know that we are doing a great deal, but there is much more that can be done. Thank you.

Mr. Christian Campagnuolo
Assistant Vice President
Marketing and Media Relations
Valencia Community College

Mr. Campagnuolo discussed the marketing and outreach efforts he is leading to improve the enrollment process at Valencia Community College, as well as efforts to inform students about career pathways offered by Valencia. These include www.EducationIsIn.com, related television commercials, the use of segmented marketing in enrollment, and improvements in communication between campus administrators and students.

Testimony. My name is Christian Campagnuolo, the Assistant Vice President of Marketing at Valencia Community College. I’m going to talk about segmented marketing. I’ll explain some of the mass marketing approaches we have taken at Valencia, how we are communicating college overall, and how we’ve overcome some of the challenges encountered. I will also discuss mass market messaging.

The state campaign is useless without the ability of financial aid offices to do local outreach, process more applications, and provide one-on-one assistance.

Valencia’s marketing and outreach efforts include an interactive website, commercials, and segmented marketing.

Before I get into that, let me give you some marketing history at Valencia. I come from the private sector and imported some of that terminology when I started, but I did not have a lot of education experience. I noticed, however, that these challenges are kind of universal and that some things heard today are similar at Valencia as well.

Prior to the current effort, Valencia had dated marketing materials and lacked a strategic marketing plan.

Some of the things that I encountered were that Valencia had dated marketing materials and lacked a strategic marketing plan. In 40 years at the college, a strategic plan had never been done, and I felt that was a gap that needed to be addressed. Valencia used two-tier communication tactics, and we have migrated from that to a segmented marketing approach. Mainly, Valencia lacked an established communication channel for prospective students, one that was consistent and authentic. It was sporadic and was divided into institutional silos, an automatic division among colleges. The silos that exist in the college environment are naturally related to various degrees: the AA versus the AS, and so on. Our current students needed consistent, reliable information.

Valencia has 42,913 students, 72 percent of whom are 18 to 24 years old. Most are enrolled part-time and are non-Caucasian. Fifty-eight percent are female. Our typical student is seeking an Associate in Arts degree, although matriculation in Associate in Science degrees is rising quickly, four percent in the last year. The 24 percent of our students who are “non-degree specified” are among those targeted.

Valencia’s new marketing strategy targets five different groups of students.

When I first started, the college was really divided into primary and secondary audiences, 18 to 24 and 25 to 45 year olds. This is the way that a consumer-product company divides up its audience, and, really, college is not a consumer product. It is more of a service. Internally, these primary and secondary audiences consist of a wide variety of individual granules of information. Ultimately, what we wanted to do was dig a little bit more into those two very large buckets and determine that information.

So we started to look at the segments produced by that digging. We came up with five: I’m going to briefly describe what those are. We gave them creative names. Our first group is called “Pipeliner”: young, non-transfer students who have graduated recently from high school, but with uncertain college aptitude. These are students who are not necessarily prepared for postsecondary education. Seventy-five percent of our audience is in the “Pipeliner” group.

The second group consists of “Postponers”: older, non-transfer students who have little or no postsecondary education. These are folks who graduated from high school and found a career. They went into the workforce, but have discovered that they need more education.

“Recoupers,” our third group, are transfer students from other colleges, part-time Valencia students, or past Valencia students. They are an important group, and we are looking for a way to get them back into the fold. The “Recoupers” have already experienced some college, and we want to make them feel as though Valencia is a good place for them to continue their education.

Next to last is the “Intender” group, who are very similar to the “Pipeliner.” However, they are very prepared for college, and come to us for many reasons, such as a desire to stay close to home.

Our last group is the “Chooser” group. They are well-prepared, but really have not decided that college is for them. They are probably taking part-time classes, and their decisions are usually made based on price, clout, and convenience.

It is important to note that as we talk about our audience, we are talking about it in these five ways, not in the silo fashion that colleges typically use. We are meeting students on their ground, on their turf—the way the student approaches us. So when we talk to students throughout our communication process, we talk to them based on these segments.

Triggers let us know how to identify the students in these segments. Primarily, age will tell us, as well as college preparation. For example, if you are over the age of 25, you are probably a “Postponer.” Time since high school graduation will tell us whether you are a transfer student or not. We also tried to determine whether our “Pipeliner” students are seeking financial aid, and we found that most of them are. With that, we know that the order in which we relay our main communication points to begin with is important. Does financial aid come first? For our “Pipeliner,” yes. Can you succeed? We know you are not necessarily a great student, but can you succeed in college? Our message is dictated by the different needs of these segments.

In terms of our mass market messaging, we talk about four main points: value, convenience, transferability, and success. We do not hit students with more than this information. “Yes, you can get to college. Valencia Community College is a good education at a great value. We have many different modes of learning, plus various campuses, so Valencia fits conveniently into your lifestyle. When you leave us, your skill set will be easily transferable to a career, a four-year institution, or just into life. You are going to find success because, ultimately, nothing changes you like an education. Nothing can impact your life like an education will.” In terms of our TV, print, and radio marketing, those are our broadening messages.

All communications focus on meeting the students where they are.

The marketing message focuses on value, convenience, transferability, and success.

Our outreach produces encounters. When students go to our website, or they meet one of our representatives at an event, or hear about us through word of mouth, we have this moment of truth, which is—what is your educational bio? We are looking for these triggers. I’m going to show you our website and how we capture these triggers in order to categorize our prospective students as “Pipeliner,” “Postponer,” “Intender,” “Recouper,” or “Chooser.” Based on those triggers, all of our messaging from the point of encounter on is messaging focused on four of these groups.

This is not revolutionary. This is very common in the outside world. We just brought it to the college, and it has been wildly successful. I am going to show you a bit of the overall broadening campaign and give you some insight into what it looks like.

Before I do that, I want to describe some of our goals.

- **Development of a sustainable new brand positioning.** The brand for the college was incredibly old—12 years—and needed to be refreshed. We want to perpetuate the image that we are student-centric and approachable.
- **Authentic communication and financial aid.** The bottom line is that finding and filling out the FAFSA form is difficult. So you want to be able to tell students that right off the bat. And that’s part of the authentic communication that we are fostering.
- **Recognize the point of view of the prospective student.** Again, meet them where they are in their educational life. We do not assume that they’re coming to us knowing what a FAFSA form is, especially if this is their first time in college.
- **Combat perceptions of quality.** My fellow panelists will probably concur that we battle the perception of whether community college is a viable educational choice. To that end, we make sure that our look and feel is very high end.
- **Generate new applications and support the return of current students.** Let me tell you a little bit about the concept, called “Education Is In.” It’s inspired by style and humanizes the breadth of Valencia’s programs through key elements from the world of fashion: individuality, quality, confidence. We were trying to figure out exactly what we were going to do, looking at the challenges that students face overall when they look at collegiate options. Also, when they decided to come to Valencia, they did not really understand their role in the ownership of the experience.

Some of Valencia’s goals include brand positioning, perceptions of quality, and understanding a student’s point of view.

The “Education Is In” campaign is inspired by style and humanizes the breadth of Valencia’s programs.

So we made Valencia a designer, and he's designing educational options for the prospective student. Basically, what are you going to wear when you go out into the world? Our logo is "Education by Valencia."

We also want to own common terms. With all due respect to my colleagues here from colleges around the country, Valencia is widely regarded as one of the top community colleges in the country. We give out more AA degrees than any other community college in the country, and we want to have a bit of swagger in our message. I want to define common terms found in the world of education, like "education," "study abroad," and all of those things by making the Valencia version. So that is where "By Valencia" comes from.

This is one of our print ads. We have basically humanized our subject matter. This is baking and pastry management by Valencia. *[Photo is shown of a woman wearing a dress that looks like an elaborate four-tiered, cream-colored cake, as well as a sheer chef's hat. See Appendix B.]* We hired a designer from New York to design various outfits that represent all of the subject matter at the college. This is architecture. *[Photo is shown of a woman wearing a construction worker's hardhat and an outfit that looks like a skyscraper.]* The ad reads, "One of Valencia Community College's 42 pre-majors for Valencia's AA degree, which guarantees admission to a state university. Check out all the fabulous options, including AS career programs, with a 93 percent placement rate, at EducationIsIn.com."

What this design says is that nothing is cooler than education. We've gotten nothing but great reaction. This is our journalism print ad sample. *[Photo is shown of a man wearing a suit made from newspaper and carrying a briefcase made from pencils.]* They are pretty outstanding. If we have time, I will show you a TV spot, but I didn't want to waste the presentation with that. Restaurant management is another one. *[Photo is shown of a woman wearing a chandelier for a hat and an outfit that is half tuxedo and half tablecloth complete with three place settings of elegant plates and silverware.]* Our television ads are very cool. They show fashion runways with models coming down the runway, and they present the college as a very forward-thinking institution.

The website, ultimately, is the engine that drives all of this. It is separate from the college's 'edu' extension site. The function of EducationIsIn.com is to connect our prospective student to the pertinent content of the college's main site. We boil down the most relevant content for a prospective student, allowing them to find the key points and not have to peck and hunt for things on our 'edu' site.

Valencia's print ads depict models attired in "clothing" based on career options.

The function of EducationIsIn.com is to connect prospective students to the pertinent content of the college's main site.

We want to create something that students can come back to over and over again and not get bored. The main theme is that you are walking up to Valencia's design table. There are a lot of different things you can do here. *[The website EducationIsIn.com is displayed for the audience.]* Over here are downloads, and you can click on this. We created unique music for our commercials, and you can download them to your MP3 player. We have wallpapers and all kinds of screen savers. So it is incredibly interactive. What they call "carrots" are in here where you can unlock all of the inventory. You could change the background color. You could change your cursor, you could change your desktop style and floor textures. A game in this particular function allows students to test their photographic ability and take a shot of some of our models as they walk down the runway. You certainly get feedback from our commentator as you do that.

Valencia's enrollment website contains many interactive Valencia's enrollment website contains many interactive features that encourage visitors to linger on the site.

These are some sketches of our models. There are some contests. This is our calendar, so you could take a look at key dates as you are moving through. This is our financial aid priority deadline. Obviously, you can print this stuff out as well. This is where you can watch any one of our commercials.

[Commercial plays. Commercial can be found at www.EducationIsIn.com]

But the main piece is this VQ magazine. I showed you the peripheral, but when we first land on the website, we drop in on the magazine, which is like an electronic viewbook. In the magazine, we boil down all of the pertinent content: why Valencia? It talks about value, transferability, and convenience. Our program listings are all interactive. You can search our 'edu' site from here. It also has some nice conventions, such as the edge of the paper turning. I know it does not mean a lot to this audience, but for the discerning, perspective college student, these elements are kind of nice. The section called, "What you need to know," tells all about our AS and AA degree programs, as well as financial aid, and all in a very authentic way.

The website centerpiece is a "VQ" magazine that functions as an electronic viewbook of the college's offerings, including financial aid.

This has been wildly successful for us because it allows our students to avoid hunting and pecking for what they need, and it has been a very unique way for us to describe the college. There are links to our answer center, to financial aid, and to student orientation. This was instituted just this fall, so we will have some nice additions as we move forward.

In terms of what we did and what we learned this fall, we found that providing an alternative source, the new website, for segmented messaging prior to enrollment, proved to be a useful resource. One of the things I did not mention is that the site is smart. As you visit the site and

log in, it recognizes you. During your session, as you look at programs and other things, it keeps tabs on that activity and sends a visitor report to us on the number of visitors, who you are, and what you looked at. So our next set of communications, after that moment of truth, is targeted to that student and for what they have been searching. For example, we ask about their age, if they are coming out of high school, and other trigger questions. Once we follow up with the student, it is all on a personal level—we know who you are. As we start to bring them through the enrollment funnel, all the communication is targeted to them.

As of December 4th, the site had averaged 4,000 visits a week. The fall, July, and August are very important, and we had 5,340 hits for the fall and 5,122 for August, which are very big numbers for us. The total of unique visits since the launch has been about 56,000. That does not seem like a lot; however, we are talking about students who are landing on a very unique part of the college and who are really intent on registering. As you will see by from our conversion rates, that is very good. The average time spent on the site is about three minutes. The industry average for websites in general is about 40 seconds, so we are really keeping them there, which is the whole point of having that peripheral content. New visitors constitute 81.4 percent. Returning visitors constitute 18 percent. And 85 percent jump to our registration page. So we are delivering 85 percent of 56,000 people directly to our registration page. Based on our conversion, it has been wildly successful.

In the fall, we were about 14 percent above last year. Granted, the economy has played a role in that increase, but in our area, in central Florida, the average is about 9 percent. We felt that extra 5 percent was relevant to the marketing campaign. In addition, our application rate, which is the best indication of how we are doing, was up 22 percent overall. We feel we have made a dent in the central Florida market. In terms of what is next, as we lead up to the spring, we will focus on establishing marketing objectives. We have a new transition jumpsite, so we partner with all the exterior elements of the college and the transitions team, who do outreach to high schools. There will be a new question section that asks prospective students a series of questions that will lead to: what do you want to do next? Do you want to take a tour of the college? Do you want to contact somebody directly?

Another new element will be called Program Explorer, which will allow students to compare programs such as business and nursing, much as you might do comparison shopping online for automobiles. How many of you have shopped online or looked online for an automobile? With our Program Explorer, students will be able to answer a few questions and compare up to four programs side-by-side, allowing comparisons of salaries and what people with those degrees do out in the world. There is

Statistics kept on the website's visitors indicate that viewers are spending time on the site, returning, and going to the registration page.

Valencia's admissions applications this year were up 22 percent overall.

a link to Valencia alumni who hold those jobs and to whom prospective students can talk or send an email.

Program Explorer creates a multi-use, customized Valencia viewbook. This will be a common piece of information that each department will be able to customize in a unique way. The first few pages will, overall, be very college-centric and consistent in terms of communication. But the back element allows each department to customize a department template to ensure consistency of communication throughout.

Last, but not least, we are finalizing a brand-new on-campus communication strategy. This is what we will be concentrating on next year, taking all of this theory that we have had for external marketing and bringing it in internally. We have a new alumni communications strategy that feeds the beginning of our funnel and helps our alumni feel that their decision to attend Valencia, whether they have moved on to a four-year institution or not, was a good and solid decision. We just launched an alumni magazine to that purpose. Thank you.

A new feature of the website will allow students to compare up to four academic programs side-by-side.

Ms. Kerin A. Hilker-Balkissoon
Director
Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program
Northern Virginia Community College

Ms. Hilker-Balkissoon discussed her work with *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program*, a joint initiative of Fairfax and Loudoun County Public Schools, Northern Virginia Community College, and George Mason University. The *Pathway* program promotes the transition and retention of at-risk students in postsecondary education. Other objectives of the program include assisting high school students with enrollment and persistence in community colleges, and encouraging transfer to a four-year college.

Testimony. My name is Kerin Hilker-Balkissoon, and I am Director of *The Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program*, which is a multi-institutional consortium led by Northern Virginia Community College. I will give you a little bit of background on NoVA, as we affectionately call our school. It is the second-largest multi-campus community college system in the country, with 65,000 credit students and over 100,000 non-credit students in attendance.

I'm here today to share with you an innovative program we created called *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program*, which is actually the brainchild of our current NoVA president, Dr. Robert Templin. Dr. Templin

The *Pathway* program helps at-risk high school students prepare to transition to community colleges.

identified three distinct trends affecting postsecondary access and success, which he felt needed to be addressed in our service area.

The first is that more students than ever before are planning to enter postsecondary education in the state of Virginia, and we simply do not have the capacity to serve all of those students at this time. Second, there is a great discrepancy between the rate of students who declare their intent to attend NoVA from a particular high school versus the percentage that actually make it there. In some cases, as much as 10 percent of a graduating class plans to attend, so a significant percentage of students plan to come to community college, but never make it. Lastly, the subset of our population that is growing the most in Northern Virginia is in demographic areas that are considered to be at-risk of persistence in higher education. From the recognition of these trends, the *Pathway to the Baccalaureate* consortium was born.

This is our consortium at this time. In 2004, NoVA initiated discussions with Fairfax County Public Schools and Loudoun County Public Schools, which are two of the largest school systems in the region, as well as George Mason University. In 2005, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation also joined our consortium to provide financial support for our Loudoun County program. In 2007, the Arlington County Public School system joined our program as well. We have become quite a large consortium, and we intend to expand to additional school systems within our service area, with the hope of expanding to all school systems in our service area within the next five years.

Our mission is a fairly simple one: to increase the access and success of at-risk students in higher education by providing a variety of interventions beginning in the senior year of high school. We have a three-part program that is equally focused on promoting transition, retention, and transfer, although this morning I'll be focusing more on the transition piece of our program.

Our application process is a joint effort of all of our program partners, and every partner institution provides feedback during the admissions process to our students. As many of our students have had limited opportunities, due to outside commitments at school, to become closely affiliated with their high school faculty, we work very closely to share the program with the full senior class. That encourages not only faculty and staff selection, but student self-selection, which is an important part of this program. Quite a few access programs and transition programs are referral-only programs.

Our admissions process is a dynamic process, and we focus much more on the future potential drive and character of an applicant and less on the

The program was developed to ensure that students who plan to attend community college are successfully able to enroll.

The program provides a variety of interventions beginning in the senior year of high school.

student's past academic achievement. We determine the presence of these characteristics through the student's application responses and the counselor's recommendations, and we strongly consider extenuating circumstances that may have affected the student's prior academic performance. Although we do not become selective unless we have a greater number of applicants than we have slots in the high school, just as the college promotes open access, our program does as well.

Although our program is open to any student who would significantly benefit from our interventions and support, we have consistently attracted applicants who meet the at-risk criteria established by the U.S. Department of Education. Ninety-three percent of our applicants meet those criteria, so nearly all of our program participants meet one of the criteria.

Our demographic data provides a clear picture of our diverse student population. We do have quite a large GPA range, 4.0 to 1.56, but our median is probably a better descriptor of our typical student. They are typically B or C students who certainly have the capacity to be successful in postsecondary education, but may need some additional support to assist them with the process. I will present some more detailed demographic data in just a moment. Some highlights: we have a 76 percent minority population, 70 percent are first-generation college students, and 41 percent have a gross family income approximately one-third of the median income in Northern Virginia, which is \$100,000. So 41 percent of our students have a gross family income of less than \$35,000 a year.

Our students represent the diversity of the college and the community, and we have strong immigrant participation, particularly by children of immigrants, with a generation 1.5 population. Also, we have a significant number of students who graduate from high school with college credit. That surprises many people who read this data. They use high school programs such as college dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and tech prep as a means of obtaining college credit.

Our more detailed data includes the ethnic breakdown and family income of students. Latino students comprise the largest subset of our population—nearly 40 percent. We also have a significant number of Middle Eastern immigrants participating in the program. This data is reflective of our ethnicity groupings rather than our immigrant population. As I mentioned, 70 percent are the first in their family to attend college. As far as income data, two-thirds of the students have a gross family income of \$50,000 or less a year, and 41 percent have a gross family income of \$35,000 or less per year, which is really staggering when you consider the cost of living in Northern Virginia.

The program focuses on the future potential drive and character of an applicant and less on the student's past academic achievement.

The majority of students in the program are minority, first-generation college students and low-income.

One surprising data point we were not expecting is the large number of students with disabilities who participate in our program. The standard incidence for individuals with disabilities in a given population is roughly 10 percent. We have over three times that in the *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program*, with 32 percent of our students having disclosed a disability to the college. In the general NoVA population, only three to four percent are disabled, so Pathways has a significant percentage who not only have a disability, but who share that information with the college.

Now for the purpose of being here today: how we do what we do, and how we assist students and get them through the process. We combine four key elements, which are: student development services; counseling services, including targeted counseling beginning at the high school level; learning communities, including and use of the learning community and the cohort model in both high school and college (which also addresses counseling); and financial support, including working with external organizations to develop scholarship opportunities and devoting significant financial support for students in the program as well. Those four elements comprise our program.

We do address all of the barriers that were identified in the opening today: academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial.

What makes our program truly innovative is that we begin working with students in their high schools during the regular school day. Many of our students have indicated that after school and evening programming is a barrier to participation because such a large percentage of our students work or have family commitments. They just cannot participate in after school and evening programming. So we maximize the opportunity for the students to participate in our program by providing all of the available services of the program for the students during the school day, including workshops and individual sessions. That requires a significant amount of negotiation and collaboration with our high school partners because we are, of course, pulling students out during the academic day, and we need to make sure that we do so in a way that does not negatively affect their high school persistence.

We provide extensive academic and career development by program counselors who are in the targeted high school at least one day a week, meeting with students individually. We also provide multiple opportunities to address the need for remediation prior to enrolling in college. We began with placement testing workshops because we found that many of our students do not do well on college placement tests, not because they do not have the necessary level of competence in the subject matter, but because the format and the content of the exam may be

The program provides student development services, counseling, learning communities, and financial support.

Students have multiple opportunities to address the need for remediation prior to enrolling in college.

Extensive workshops are available to inform parents and families about college.

confusing to them. So the placement testing workshop is designed to demystify that process. We bring our placement tests on-site at participating high schools so that students do not have to come to campus. At every one of our participating schools, we have a series of testing dates posted. And we actually collaborate with other college programs, such as our dual enrollment program, to run these testing dates at the same time. So we test large populations of students early on. The purpose of testing students early is to provide information for those students who are not at college level so they can seek remediation early. We provide English and math skill-building sessions, and when they take the placement tests again, if they still do not quite make it, we provide what we call a summer boot camp in English and math during the last four weeks of the summer. This is coupled with a student development course of college success skills. We had a 96 percent success rate in the boot camp this summer, and it was our first year running it. These students were able to move directly from developmental courses into college level coursework in the fall.

In terms of social barrier interventions, again, because we start working with these students early on, we have a greater opportunity to serve as advocates with their families and in their communities. We do an extensive outreach program at recreation centers and with parent groups to make sure that we provide appropriate and effective information to the full community about access to higher education.

Ninety percent of our students work 25 hours a week or more, so social barriers are significant for our population; many are family breadwinners who list their parents as dependents on their tax returns. Or they have children of their own—they are teen parents, or care for younger siblings.

The program uses the one-stop student services model, in which a college official is cross-trained to provide a variety of services.

We conduct extensive workshops for parents and families to provide information on additional resources that are available. We really use the cohort model. That is the key to what we do. We build these cohorts starting in high school and have events for the full cohort both at George Mason University and at Northern Virginia Community College. We begin when they are in high school so that they have an opportunity to develop as a cohort and become their own support system.

Through our time and money management workshops we provide clear strategies for balancing work, family, and school commitments.

As far as informational and complexity barriers, we use the one-stop student services model, which involves one official from the college (in this case the program counselor) being cross-trained to provide a variety of services to students. Our counselors are cross-trained on basic domicile and financial aid processes, including the FAFSA process and the first level of the in-state application process. We provide basic financial aid

information, including FAFSA processing, verification processing, and verification of student status. We verify in-state eligibility on-site at the high schools. This is, again, a means of reducing the need for students to visit a variety of offices on campus or deal with a variety of staff, and the focus is on providing a streamlined transition for students.

We also provide a series of workshops to demystify the college experience for students and parents, and we work with the school system because we have limited access to translators at the college. School systems are better funded in that capacity. We provide our information in a variety of languages and to a variety of targeted parenting groups, including *Parentes Latinos*, which is a very powerful advocacy group for Latino parents in the region, as well as our Korean parents group.

One frequently overlooked issue, especially for at-risk students, is getting to, from, and around campus. In many cases, that may be a barrier for students. They may not have a car, and they may not live within easy access of public transportation. Or they may have a disability and require assistance with mobility around campus. We provide transportation assistance, help students to identify bus routes or ride-sharing, identify ways to get to and from campus, and provide mobility training for students who need assistance navigating the campus.

In terms of financial barriers, we begin very early, in fact, in November, providing financial aid workshops to students and parents in our program. We conduct a series of these workshops. We offer a large workshop for parents in January, and then we partner with a nonprofit organization in our community called College Access Fairfax that is focused on providing financial aid assistance. They offer a *Super Saturday* program similar to the program Melissa mentioned in Northern Virginia. At *Super Saturday*, families come for assistance with the FAFSA. All of the *Pathways* counselors volunteer at these events, along with College Access Fairfax and the Virginia Financial Aid Association.

Another thing that makes this program unique is an alternate needs assessment process for students who do not meet the criteria for filling out a FAFSA. Students come to us from a variety of immigrant populations, such as temporary protected status and other legal, but temporary statuses that would prohibit them from submitting the FAFSA. The alternate process allows students to demonstrate financial need and qualify for scholarships through the program. We have \$50,000 in dedicated scholarship funding available through the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and the Armed Services Communications and Electronics Foundation. We also have approximately \$200,000 in supplemental grant assistance, and that is for students who have at least \$3,500 of financial need not met by other grant programs.

An alternative financial needs assessment enables immigrant populations to receive financial aid.

There is approximately \$200,000 in supplemental grant assistance available to students.

Eighty-six percent of the first cohort successfully transitioned from high school to higher education.

Although it is not the purpose of the discussion today, I want to share with you that our program does not terminate as the students transition to NoVA, but provides continued support at NoVA through events, dedicated counseling and retention programming, and transfer assistance. With George Mason University as our program partner, we have a guaranteed admissions agreement through which students with a 2.5 GPA are guaranteed admission to the university. They may also apply to George Mason a year early if they have that GPA and may also guest-matriculate, which involves taking courses both at Northern Virginia Community College and at George Mason University while completing their associate's degree. We handle the financial aid so that one financial aid package covers the modified cost of attendance at both institutions.

So how are we doing? We've had a lot of success with this student population. Eighty-six percent of our first cohort successfully transitioned from high school to higher education. Approximately 72 percent went directly to NoVA, and the remaining 8 percent went directly to a four-year institution. We also had very good retention data from the first to the second semester. We retained 90.5 percent of our students, and, from the first to the second year, retained 81 percent of our students, which is significantly higher than our college averages for full-time traditional-aged attendees. Seventy-two percent of our students were in good academic standing, so the students are showing positive academic performance as well as positive retention and transition rates. For this student population, good academic standing can be as low as 40 to 50 percent, according to a Lumina Foundation study. So we were happy to have 72 percent of our students in good standing.

The program provides intervention to prevent stop out students from becoming drop out students.

We also provide intervention to prevent stop-out students from becoming drop-out students. We stay in touch with students who cannot attend for a semester, and, although we do not have concrete data yet, we found that significant numbers of stop-out students are coming back and asking us to stay in touch with them.

Our financial aid participation rate is 37 percent, which is nearly double the NoVA average, a little bit under 20 percent.

This year, we will serve approximately 1,850 students, of which 1,250 are located in the high schools—they are high school seniors this year. Five hundred and fifty of our first and second cohorts are at NoVA. We already have our first graduate, who is finishing up a semester early and will be graduating later this month. We have a cohort graduating in May 2008 and getting ready to go on to George Mason or other four-year institutions.

We feel that the real key to our success is that we begin with the end in mind. We establish high expectations for our students. In the words of renowned educational researcher Vincent Tinto, “No one rises to low expectations.” Thank you.

Practices to Enable Enrollment

This testimony and a review of the literature have revealed a number of practices that enable student enrollment at community colleges. These strategies include identifying and responding to institution- or state-specific enrollment barriers, communicating information through outreach efforts, creating systems to better link secondary and postsecondary education, improving administrative procedures, and ensuring that sufficient financial aid is available. As noted earlier, research suggests that low-income and disadvantaged students face five general barriers when enrolling, persisting, and transferring: academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial. The enrollment practices that follow work to address multiple barriers, thereby maximizing enrollment and opportunity for as many students as possible. These practices are offered as possible models for institutions to implement in ways that best serve their needs.

These enrollment practices are offered as possible models for institutions to implement in ways that best serve their needs.

Identify and Respond to Institution- or State-Specific Enrollment Barriers

Working collaboratively to identify and respond to institution- or state-specific barriers is an initial step in the process of enabling enrollment for low-income students. Research suggests the need to analyze a system and identify problem areas before implementing policies or programs. The Education Commission of the States encourages evaluating and understanding conditions in the state, particularly the needs of underrepresented students, and crafting policies to address those needs (Ruppert 2003). *Achieving the Dream* is an excellent example of this approach. The project works with states and community colleges to identify policies affecting access and success, learn how to gather and analyze pertinent data, and respond with appropriate policies and programs (Dougherty and Reid 2006). By first identifying barriers unique to a state or community college system, practitioners can determine targeted approaches to address them and better enable enrollment.

Working collaboratively to identify and respond to institution- or state-specific barriers is an initial step toward enabling enrollment.

Panelists from Maryland and California discussed enrollment-related programs resulting from state-specific barriers. A 2001 report from the Maryland Higher Education Commission revealed that only a marginal portion of the state’s need-based grant was reaching community college

students, in part because the grant deadline was too early for most of them to take advantage of it. Community college students often begin the enrollment process just prior to the start of the academic term, and so miss the deadline. Once this barrier was identified, the state worked to improve funding approaches, while community colleges strengthened early awareness initiatives to encourage more students to apply for aid by the state deadline.

The California Community Colleges' *I Can Afford College* campaign was a response to the state's decision to increase student fees at community colleges by 64 percent.

The California Community Colleges' *I Can Afford College* campaign was a response to the state's decision to increase student fees at community colleges by 64 percent. State leaders recognized that this increase could create a financial barrier for students, low-income students in particular, and responded by investing \$38 million annually to increase financial aid staff at individual colleges and to fund *I Can Afford College*, a financial aid information campaign.

Efforts to address institution-specific barriers were detailed by panelists from Florida and Virginia. Valencia Community College in Florida has improved enrollment as a response to barriers created by out-of-date institutional policies. For example, the college did not have an established method of communicating consistent information to prospective students, nor did its marketing approach recognize the differences among the different types of prospective students attracted to Valencia. By analyzing the data on existing students, the college was able to create a series of up-to-date student profiles that enabled it to establish clear messages and an interactive website.

Valencia Community College has improved enrollment as a response to barriers created by out-of-date institutional policies.

Likewise, Northern Virginia Community College (NoVA) determined that more high school students were declaring intent to attend NoVA than actually enrolled and were ill-prepared to succeed as well. Established as a response to this analysis, the *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program* is a collaborative effort by NoVA, local high schools, George Mason University, and others to assist students through the transition from secondary to postsecondary education and ensure success in higher education. The *Pathways* program serves students within the high schools that they attend, providing academic, informational, and financial services.

As the panelists' testimony demonstrates, state-specific barriers to enrollment are often related to financial barriers. In both cases, Maryland and California, part of the solution was to reduce informational barriers: Maryland has been unable to adjust state grant deadlines, but has increased awareness of them, and California acted to ensure that low-income students recognized that fee waivers were available for them, as well as other types of aid.

Institution-specific barriers are products of multiple issues. Complexity at the institutional level that prevents colleges from accurately assessing the needs of prospective students is one problem. In addition, institutions that seek to increase enrollment for underserved populations must also address the academic barriers of their populations.

Communicate Information through Outreach Efforts

Outreach is a powerful tool to inform prospective students, help them overcome their concerns, and assist them with the enrollment process (Pathways to College Network 2004). Outreach is a broad concept that encompasses a variety of efforts and approaches. It can focus on just one problem issue or can take a comprehensive approach; it can target one specific group, such as low-income or minority students, or serve a wider audience. Some key approaches to using outreach include broad communication through mass marketing; direct, personal communication through local advising; and detailed communication through Internet sites and resources.

Mass marketing has been found to be important in terms of increasing college access through information (CommunicationWorks LLC 2002; Pathways to College Network n.d.; College Access Marketing n.d.). The purpose of the mass market campaign of the California Community Colleges, *I Can Afford College*, is to combat misinformation or a lack of information about college affordability in order to encourage enrollment. Components of the campaign include radio, television, and print advertisements used to target young low-income students, low-income adults, and others who influence these students. The ads direct prospective students to a website for more information on financial aid availability and assistance, including the contact information for community college financial aid offices. As a result, the California Community Colleges have seen a 20 percent increase in financial aid applications and awards.

In contrast to this broad approach, financial aid administrators in Maryland have used direct, personal outreach methods. These efforts include holding financial aid information workshops for families and school counselors at area middle and high schools, sending financial aid information to various groups within the community, participating in College Goal Sunday, hosting a Financial Aid Awareness Week, and participating in a televised event, *You Can Afford College*, that answers questions about financial aid. As a result there has been a 26 percent increase in the number of community college students who apply for aid by the state grant deadline. Similarly, NoVA's *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program* includes community information workshops,

Outreach is a powerful tool to inform prospective students, help them overcome their concerns, and assist them with the enrollment process.

Key approaches to outreach include mass marketing, local advising, and Internet sites and resources.

tutoring within the high schools, and advising on how to prepare for college.

The Internet is also a channel for effective outreach, as research shows that 87 percent of teenagers use it and more households now have access to broadband (Lenhart et al. 2005; Horrigan 2006). Valencia Community College's website, www.EducationIsIn.com, seeks to reach prospective students through an interactive format. An electronic magazine is the main feature, providing essential information about Valencia, its degree and career offerings, the benefits of various careers, and how to enroll. The website receives about 4,000 visitors a week and enrollment has increased as a result. Northern Virginia Community College (NoVA) has also engaged in web-based outreach through their online FAFSA video tutorial. In the tutorial, two student narrators provide a detailed explanation of each step in the application process, while questions and instructions from the FAFSA are displayed on the screen. This tutorial addresses two issues in the college community: a shortage of financial aid counselors to provide personalized assistance, and a student population that has difficulty meeting with counselors during regular business hours. Since the tutorial went online in July 2007, the number of NoVA students submitting a FAFSA has significantly increased.

Outreach addresses informational barriers, but also reduces social, complexity, and financial barriers.

Outreach is a method of addressing informational barriers, but in so doing, can contribute to reducing social, complexity, and financial barriers as well. Mass market approaches have been helpful in a state as large as California, while Maryland, with a smaller geographic area, is better positioned to provide more personalized and directed outreach. Both large and small states, as well as individual colleges, can take advantage of the Internet as a point of contact between institution and prospective student through which multiple, coordinated messages can be accessed at-will on the timetable of the individual.

Programs offering strong academic and social supports to low-income, at-risk high school students increase the likelihood of such students enrolling in college.

Create Systems to Better Link Secondary and Postsecondary Education

Community colleges can help bridge the transition from secondary to postsecondary education by creating systems that link the two educational levels. Successful efforts combine academic, social, and information supports. Research has shown that programs offering strong academic and social supports to low-income, at-risk high school students increase the likelihood of such students enrolling in college (Martinez and Klopott 2005). Dual enrollment is another way to develop a link between educational systems that has been shown to increase college access for low-income and disadvantaged students (Karp et al. 2007).

NoVA's *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program* developed a partnership with area high schools to more effectively enable college enrollment for minority, low-income, and first-generation students. The program works within high schools, offers a variety of services, including placement testing and accelerated tutoring, to inform and prepare students for enrollment. NoVA's program takes a cohort approach, working with students in high school and staying with them to provide support through community college and transfer to a four-year institution.

An example of a comprehensive approach at the state level is the College and Career Readiness Pilot Program Act that the governor of Illinois recently signed into law. This act will create partnerships between community colleges and area high schools to determine students' college readiness early by examining gaps in the curricular alignment between secondary and postsecondary education and determining ways to close those gaps (Illinois Board of Higher Education 2007). This may improve the level of academic preparation that students have when beginning a postsecondary education. Preparation and community college enrollment will be promoted through measures such as tutoring, dual enrollment, and AP courses.

Many states, institutions, and organizations are actively promoting dual-enrollment. An examination of dual enrollment populations in Florida found that students were more likely to go on to enroll in college and more likely to enroll full-time. Similar results were found for students who participated in dual enrollment through the College Now program at the City University of New York (Karp et al. 2007). The Community College Research Center is beginning a dual enrollment initiative for low-income, underrepresented, and low-achieving students in California, funded by the James Irvine Foundation, called *Concurrent Courses: Pathways to College and Career Initiatives* (The Community College Research Center n.d.). *The College and Career Transitions Initiative*, operated by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education has similar goals. In particular, the initiative focuses on showing students career pathways (The League for Innovation in Community Colleges n.d.).

Alignment strategies, such as the ones discussed above, are primarily a means of addressing academic barriers. Students who engage in these curricula or curricular supports are more likely to be academically prepared for college. However, alignment strategies also work to alleviate social, informational, and complexity barriers by familiarizing high school students with college administrators, procedures, and campuses.

Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program developed a partnership with area high schools to enable college enrollment for minority, low-income, and first-generation students.

An examination of dual enrollment populations in Florida found that students were more likely to go on to enroll in college and more likely to enroll full-time.

Improve Administrative Procedures Related to Enrollment

Unfortunately, admissions, financial aid, and registrar's offices can significantly increase barriers community college students experience related to enrollment. Recent research has noted that these services, which are intended to decrease barriers, can actually reinforce them by being structured in such a way that students who need them most cannot access and benefit from them (Karp et al. 2008). A new report from The Institute of College Access and Success, *Green Lights & Red Tape*, exemplifies this point. The report highlights procedures in financial aid offices at California Community Colleges that reduce or increase barriers related to enrollment. Some services found to reduce barriers include making financial aid information available in other languages, restructuring office staffing such that experienced staff are available to answer student questions, and making available computers with staff nearby to assist students with their online FAFSA application.

Unfortunately, admissions, financial aid, and registrar's offices can significantly increase barriers community college students experience related to enrollment.

The one-stop student services model is another solution to these problems. One-stop might refer to multiple services provided by liaison administrators or ways in which services are centralized and linked. NoVA's *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program* has cross-trained its community college staff in financial aid and other student services. A staff member works within a high school to assist students with a variety of their enrollment needs so that they do not have to locate different offices on the college campus. Skyline College in California has created a One-Stop Student Services Center that integrates in one location all outreach, admissions, assessment, registration, articulation, and advising, as well as services for returning students. By increasing accessibility and quality of services for students and connecting the technological framework services, the center was able to increase efficiency (Ybarra-Garcia 2002).

The one-stop student services model reduces complexity barriers by centralizing and simplifying administrative services.

Improving administrative procedures is a matter of addressing complexity barriers. Whether a college adopts targeted solutions to particular problems, trains liaison administrators, or creates an integrated single services location will depend on the needs of the institution and the students that it serves. Programs that use alignment strategies may benefit from liaison administrators, while colleges seeking solely to increase enrollment might look toward a single services location model. Other schools may need to analyze enrollment outcomes and determine where specific roadblocks occur for prospective students.

Ensure that Sufficient Financial Aid is Available

Although tuition at community colleges is lower than tuition at four-year public and private colleges, it can still be out of reach for many. Aside from tuition, the additional costs associated with attending community college, such as textbooks, computers, transportation, and childcare, as well as lost income, may make education prohibitive (Zumeta and Frankle 2007). Ensuring the availability of need-based financial aid is a key component to enabling student enrollment at the community college level (Kirshstein and Rhodes 2001; Zumeta and Frankle 2007). Strategies for doing so include providing additional funding or waivers for certain programs or sectors, and aligning state grant programs with the specific needs of community college students.

NoVA's *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program* takes many measures to assist students with the college enrollment process, and it also recognizes that some students cannot enroll without financial assistance. To address this problem, NoVA makes available \$200,000 to provide supplemental need-based grants to program students. In a similar fashion, California offers the California Community College Board of Governor's Fee Waiver to all community college students eligible for the federal Pell Grant and the state Cal Grant, a waiver that essentially covers all college costs (The Institute for College Access and Success 2007).

Many states have sought to align their grant programs with the needs of community college students. In particular, Maryland has worked to ensure equity in the distribution of grant funds among all postsecondary sectors, including schools with high percentages of Pell Grant enrollees. Other states that have opened grant programs to part-time students, an action that benefits community college students, include Ohio, where community college students enrolled only quarter-time are eligible to receive the Ohio College Opportunity Grant, and New Jersey, which allows part-time students to receive its Tuition Assistance Grant (Dougherty et al. 2006; Higher Education Student Assistance Authority n.d.). Other states, such as Washington, have given priority to certain student segments in awarding state grants, such as foster care students.

Successfully addressing financial barriers often requires understanding how the informational, social, and complexity barriers impact students' ability to afford community college. For example, part-time students face different financial barriers than foster care students do as a result of the other types of barriers they encounter. In addition, targeting state grant aid to specific groups of students and supplementing it with aid from individual programs and colleges are ways of further eliminating financial barriers for students.

Ensuring the availability of need-based financial aid is a key component to enabling student enrollment.

Making sure that students are able to enroll is the first step; the next is ensuring that they are able to persist.

These five practices offer a variety of methods by which to better enable enrollment, and provide a starting platform for states and institutions wishing to do so. Making sure that students are able to enroll is the first key step in the transition to college and the pathway to obtain a bachelor's degree. Once students have successfully matriculated at community college, the next important area on which to focus is ensuring that students are able to persist throughout their chosen programs.

ENSURING PERSISTENCE

Background

While all students do not enroll in community college for the purpose of attaining a degree, research has shown that the persistence patterns of those who intend to gain a degree or transfer are troubling and inconsistent (Driscoll 2007). Data from 2006 show that after three years, 45 percent of first-time community college students were not enrolled in any type of institution and had not received a degree, far higher than four-year college student attrition rates (NCES 2007). Inasmuch as these schools serve as a pathway to a bachelor's degree, the evident pattern of non-completion is disturbing. Forty-six percent of our nation's postsecondary students attend community colleges; thus, increasing persistence at the community college level is vital to preparing the nation's future workforce (AACC 2008).

Understanding why students do not complete their programs is crucial. Among other factors, students drop out or stop out prior to completion because of the competing pressures of work and family, which limit the time available for academic pursuits (Tinto 1993; Schmid and Abell 2003; Sydow and Sandel 1998). Many students also cite related financial constraints as a reason for non-completion (Choitz and Widom 2003). While open access ensures that any high school graduate can attend, community college students, on average, enter less academically prepared than their peers at four-year colleges, which can also inhibit persistence (Bailey et al. 2005; Adelman 2006; Bailey and Alfonso 2005).

Directing resources to improve factors affecting student persistence is more difficult for community colleges than four-year colleges for multiple reasons. State education formulas are often inequitable, typically funding two-year colleges at lower levels than four-year colleges (Mullin and Honeyman 2007). This lack of adequate funding is a top concern among community college leaders (Education Commission of the States 2000). In addition to funding issues, community colleges face challenges in serving a population more complex than an average four-year college. This diversity means that appropriate support services for persistence will vary from college to college. For example, full-time community college students entering directly from high school have different motivations, goals, and problems than do older, part-time students with full-time jobs and families to support (Bailey and Alfonso 2005). These factors must be considered along with other persistence-related barriers in order to develop and implement successful retention efforts.

Understanding and addressing persistence at the community college level is a multi-faceted task that takes into account fluctuating state funds and a

Data from 2006 show that after three years, 46 percent of first-time community college students were not enrolled in any type of institution and had not received a degree.

Directing resources to improve student persistence is difficult for community colleges due to a lack of funding and the varying needs of the diverse student population.

diverse service population. To meet persistence goals, college leaders must constantly reevaluate institutional objectives and refocus efforts. Nationwide, organizations are taking steps to improve persistence at community colleges. The *Bridges to Opportunity* initiative, funded by the Ford Foundation, works to improve educational and economic outcomes of low-income adults, while *Achieving the Dream* focuses on using data to support the development of strategies for student success. The MetLife Foundation's *Community College Excellence Award* honors colleges achieving results with underserved student populations. All of these efforts take into account the five general barriers that affect student persistence: academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial.

To meet persistence goals, college leaders must reevaluate objectives and efforts to account for the barriers that affect student persistence.

Main Barriers

Academic. Community college students often enroll with academic needs that differ from their peers at four-year colleges. Some may be returning to college after working, and others may be traditional-aged students who have always struggled in school. In addition, a student's enrollment status is related to academic success and steady persistence. Of all students beginning at public two-year institutions in 2003, only six percent of students continuously enrolled part-time received any degree after three years, compared to 23 percent of students continuously enrolled full-time. Only 31 percent of students continuously enrolled part-time were still in school or had transferred by that time compared to 48 percent of students continuously enrolled full-time (NCES 2007).

Students who are not college-qualified, who are enrolled in developmental courses, or who lack sufficient study and academic skills are less likely to persist in college (Grimes 1997). Certain milestones such as completing developmental education requirements, passing the first course of college-level math, and generating a year of college-level credit are critical points in keeping on the path toward degree completion (Calcagno et al. 2006; Prince 2006; Adelman 2006). Students who have yet to reach these milestones are at a greater risk of not persisting.

Social. Research at four-year colleges suggests that students can encounter persistence problems when they are not adequately integrated with the school community (Braxton et al. 2004; Tinto 1975). Because of the commuter-oriented population of two-year colleges, building strong relationships with faculty and classmates can be even more challenging. This lack of connection can lead to feelings of isolation and inadequate access to resources that could promote persistence efforts.

While much research exists highlighting the types of engagement that enhance persistence for students at four-year institutions, less research has

Students who are not college-qualified, who lack sufficient study skills, and are not integrated with the school community are less likely to persist.

been done on this subject for students at two-year colleges. The research that is available, however, suggests that community college students benefit from becoming engaged in learning communities tailored to their needs (Bailey and Alfonso 2005).

Informational. Many students do not have adequate advising to obtain information on the behaviors and steps needed to enhance persistence. Even if the information is available, it may not be accessible or tailored to meet the students' needs. Students may not be aware of information gaps until it is too late, so a system of advising that requires students to initiate contact may not be as effective as one that automatically emails, calls, or otherwise notifies students of impending deadlines (Rosenbaum et al. 2006).

Many students do not have adequate advising to obtain information on the behaviors and steps needed to enhance persistence.

Orientation courses have been shown to be positively related to persistence. This implies that students who are not introduced to the issues discussed in orientation courses, such as financial aid and academic advising processes, face challenges in the areas of academic progress and persistence (Rendon 1995; Shulock and Moore 2007).

Complexity. The lack of clarity and seeming disconnect among institutional policies and offices can lead to student confusion, which can result in mistakes that hinder persistence. These mistakes might include enrolling in inappropriate courses and delays with financial aid and bill payment, among others. Students often comment that it is difficult to understand and navigate the various offices, processes, and policies of a campus (Community College Study of Student Engagement 2007).

Students comment that it is difficult to understand and navigate the various offices, processes, and policies of a campus.

These comments corroborate research outlining differences among community colleges relative to persistence efforts. Research finds that support services need not only be available, but must be coordinated and aligned throughout the college's administrative offices (Jenkins 2006). Additionally, in order for large-scale systemic change to occur, alignment of expectations and policies between K-12 and higher education must be in place (Kazis 2006; Jenkins 2006). Otherwise, disconnected systems and services could be relaying different messages and confusing students.

Financial. Low-income students, especially nontraditional students, indicate that financial issues are the primary hindrance to completing college plans; this includes not only tuition, but rent, childcare, and transportation (Grossman and Gooden 2002; Choitz and Widom 2003). The average unmet need among low-income students who attended community college full-time in the 2003-04 school year was \$5,567 (Long and Riley 2007). Thus, the average remaining expenses after the award of need-based aid, including the Pell Grant, require students to work or borrow to pay for education.

Low-income students indicate that financial issues are the primary hindrance to completing college plans.

The Community College Research Center has encouraging research on the effectiveness of student success courses.

The financial burden of college can increase pressure to work, taking away time that could be devoted to study. In fact, 50 percent of community college students work full-time and attend school part-time, which often lowers eligibility for financial aid and increases time-to-degree and persistence (AACC 2008). Students who are head of household must also consider rent, childcare, and other cost-of living expenses. Furthermore, the price of textbooks at two-year public colleges has risen over 100 percent in the past 17 years, more rapidly than other commodities during the same time period (ACSFA 2007). Students unable to purchase textbooks may be at a disadvantage academically, especially at community colleges where the library may not be as extensive as that of a four-year college.

Panelist Testimony

This session focused on strategies that promote student persistence and completion at community colleges. Panelists included researchers and community college leaders who discussed a variety of persistence initiatives, including global strategies based on research and program-, institution-, or state-specific efforts. These included state legislation, research on student engagement, and financial incentives that serve to increase student persistence and success.

Mr. Robert Shireman was the moderator for the session.

Dr. Thomas R. Bailey
Director
Community College Research Center
Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Bailey discussed his research on the role that “student success” courses play in providing the information and academic guidance necessary to persistence. Student success courses teach study skills, coping mechanisms, and topics related to making the transition to higher education. He presented research findings from Florida’s community college system.

Testimony. The work we are doing at the Community College Research Center relates to all of the five barriers to student success at community colleges that we have been asked to address. Since I can’t discuss all of our activities related to the barriers, I have passed around one of our newsletters to tell you about some other things we are doing. I know you have received an incredible amount of information today, and, basically, I

am going to make one point, which is that we have very encouraging research on the effectiveness of student success courses. I will explain what that is in a second. I think we need to nail down our conclusions a bit more, but, at this point, the results are encouraging. While I think that we need to make some very profound changes in the way that community colleges operate, it's nice to find something that is relatively simple and straightforward that has some apparent effect on student success.

Student success courses are often referred to as "College 101," and they are part of the *Pathways to the Baccalaureate* program that we just heard about. They tend to be courses students take in their first year, and there are a variety of different aspects to them. One of the things we need to do as we look at these courses is think about which components are most effective and learn more about their effectiveness. Student success courses are combinations of study skills and organized counseling. Students who enter community colleges do not know much about college; they often do not have parents or siblings who have been to college, so counseling and providing information is extremely important. In traditional approaches to counseling, participation by the student is often voluntary. Counselor-to-student ratios are extremely high. In the end, those traditional approaches have not proved to be very effective, so student success courses are an organized way to introduce students to college. We have also done some research on dual enrollment, and student success courses given in high school can be effective as well. They focus on academic and career planning and provide students with study skills. And we also found that they are an important source of social support, something that we were not expecting.

We are doing two studies, one, a quantitative analysis of the impact of the participation in student success courses. This was done with Florida data. We are also doing a qualitative study in which we track and repeatedly interview fifty students over the course of two years. We continue to interview them even if they have left the college. We wanted to get both quantitative and qualitative information. We still need to do more research in this area, so we are planning some additional research efforts. The first study we have done is part of *Achieving the Dream*, a national initiative that I know Richard Kazis will talk more about. The second study we did with funding from the Sloan Foundation. The additional research that we are planning now is connected to the National Center for Postsecondary Research, which is an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) center located at the Community College Research Center in partnership with MDRC. So those are the subsequent things that we will be doing.

The first study analyzes Florida's extensive unit record data system. We followed students for seventeen terms, which is five and two-thirds years. There are about 35,000 students in this sample, and we looked at whether

Student success courses teach study skills, coping mechanisms, and topics related to making the transition to higher education.

Student success courses are combinations of study skills and organized academic and career counseling.

they completed a degree or credential, whether they transferred to the state university system, or whether they persisted in school into the fifth year. We found that Florida had done a previous study that looked at what happened to students who had *completed* student success courses. Sometimes students drop out of these courses, so what we did was look at those students who *started* the courses. So we considered that part of the treatment really is whether or not one can retain students in those courses. And here are the basic results: Florida students in the course were eight percent more likely to earn a credential. We divided this between those who were in developmental education and those who were not, and there were also positive benefits that were statistically significant. We're using Florida's state data system in order to follow students as they enter the state university system. We know whether they have switched to another community college, so we can take those things into account, and we have demographic data available through the state system, as well as test scores, so we did control for those things. There are other things for which we cannot control, and that is one of the reasons we need to do some additional work.

A study found that students who had taken a student success course were more likely to earn a credential compared to those who did not take the course.

Our second study used qualitative methods. We followed about 40-50 students for two years and re-interviewed them several times—we really wanted to understand why students left community colleges and see if we could differentiate between students who left and students who did not. We *did not* start this study with the objective of looking at student success courses, but, nevertheless, this is one of the strongest aspects that emerged from this study. There were many other aspects to this study, so we were surprised. It is always interesting when you start something and you get hit with an insight or a result that you were not really expecting. Many of the students who took student success courses—and not all did—found that this was the most effective source of information that they had about colleges. They had very positive reactions to the courses.

Many of the students found that this was the most effective source of information that they had about college.

So how do we connect these findings to the different barriers we are discussing today? College information and resources, advising, and academic planning were incorporated into student success courses. And even when they were not a formal part of the program, often students would approach the teacher or professor who was leading the course for additional academic advising and planning. The courses also taught time management and study habits. What about social barriers—I interpreted this a bit broadly, but, nevertheless, we know that community college students who are part-time or work are not often hanging around the campus, they are not in a dorm, and they do not get a chance to interact with their peers and learn from that. So student success courses are a structured way to provide some of the social relationships that turn out to be so important in success at college.

We felt that student success courses, in fact, were something in which different academic and counseling services came together in a comprehensive and complimentary way such that the information received made it more possible for the student to experience academic success. We felt that this sort of qualitative look at these issues was at least consistent with the quantitative research we had done in Florida. And the qualitative project was in different states by the way: these colleges were in Connecticut and New Jersey.

I think that there is a lot of interest in student success courses—many of the colleges in the *Achieving the Dream* project are using them. Nationally there is growing interest. And these positive findings warrant more research and more rigorous evaluation. I am not sure whether Lashawn Richburg-Hayes is going to talk about this, but MDRC is looking at a learning community that combines student success courses with developmental education. Also, as part of the evaluation of *Achieving the Dream*, MDRC is doing a study of an experiment with student success courses in North Carolina. We will also be doing some additional random assignment studies so that we can control for the background characteristics and other types of motivational issues for which we have not been able to control in our other studies.

But, nevertheless, I think that we come out of this very encouraged; we certainly think this type of program needs to be moved forward. We need to study the components and determine which aspects work. We need to understand how it fits together with other types of programs. Well, I am a researcher, so of course I am going to end by saying, “we need some more research,” but, in this case, we certainly have encouraging results that warrant further attention. Thank you.

Dr. Lashawn Richburg-Hayes
Senior Research Associate
Young Adults and Postsecondary Education
MDRC

Dr. Richburg-Hayes discussed the results of the *Louisiana Opening Doors* demonstration program, which found that additional student financial assistance increased credit accumulation and persistence at community colleges. The *Opening Doors* demonstration consists of several projects designed to affect persistence at community colleges in different areas of the nation. The Louisiana demonstration, a scholarship program, provided incentives for students to reach certain persistence benchmarks.

Student success courses are a structured way to provide some of the social relationships that turn out to be so important in success at college.

These positive findings warrant more research and more rigorous evaluation.

MDRC evaluated a scholarship program in Louisiana that provided incentives for students to reach certain persistence benchmarks.

Scholarships were funded by a TANF surplus and were offered to students at two community colleges.

Testimony. I am from MDRC, which is a social policy research organization. We specialize in doing random assignment studies of strategies in different areas; my particular focus is on postsecondary education and young adults. Today, I am going to talk to you about a program that we evaluated as part of our community college portfolio. As you know, community colleges serve a number of different purposes that were discussed earlier. But despite the purposes and the numbers of students that they serve, students are not very successful—most students do not persist. As a result of a review of the literature and focus groups that we have conducted with students of all ages, some of the barriers we have discovered (some of which were discussed earlier) include poor academic preparation, competing demands, and difficulty paying for school. As a result of this, we have developed a research agenda to look at the most promising strategies that community colleges are already using to address some of these barriers. We looked at four strategies in particular, including two versions of counseling, one that focused on lowering the counselor-to-student ratio and another that worked to target probationary students toward services that were already available on campus, such as student learning centers. The third strategy that we evaluated was the learning community, a popular movement in community colleges now, in which students are educated in cohorts. The fourth strategy was an incentive scholarship program, and that is what I will talk to you about today.

All of these strategies were examined under our project called *Opening Doors*. The Louisiana project focused specifically on an incentive scholarship. This scholarship was unique in that it was a collaboration between state administrators of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program as well as MDRC. And, in fact, administrators approached MDRC about implementing this program because at the time, in 2003, their coffers were flush with TANF surplus monies, which is no longer the case. They were intrigued by our previous studies that had shown incentives could help move welfare recipients off the rolls and into work, and they wanted to know whether such a study could work for community college students in terms of furthering education. So the scholarships were funded by the TANF surplus and administered by the Louisiana Workforce Commission. We worked with two community colleges in Louisiana: Delgado Community College and Louisiana Technical College. The demonstration ran from 2003-05 and stopped only because of Hurricane Katrina, which I will discuss in detail in a moment.

As I mentioned, this is a bit of a different scholarship program. For one, this is not a merit scholarship program: it did not depend on high school GPA, nor on prior college GPA. It was very generous—\$1,000 per semester for two semesters that was paid out in increments based on achievement. So upon registration, a student received \$250; upon passing

their midterm exams, they received another \$250; and upon passing their final courses, they received \$500. The pass rates for these were also very moderate. A student was considered passing if they were making adequate progress in their community college, which was equivalent to attaining a grade of C or better. In addition to the scholarship disbursement, there were counselors who were there to monitor academic achievement. The original design had counselors performing more of a social role, but our implementation research suggests that what actually happened was that the counselors functioned more as monitors, verifying that grades were achieved, working with students to correct incorrect grades that were reported on transcripts, and disbursing checks to students.

Another important point of this project to understand is that the scholarship checks went directly to the students and not to the institutions. Although the scholarships were advertised as helping students with educational expenses, the funds were more broadly available than, say, Pell Grants, in that if a particular barrier facing a student was, say, childcare, then they could use the funds for childcare as opposed to being forced to buy textbooks or pay tuition. Another important thing to note about this project was that the students targeted were low-income parents who had income within 200 percent of the poverty level. So this population was the subset that was mentioned earlier—the 17 percent of all students who are single parents. In addition, these students had already made the decision to matriculate at a college. So this was not a program that encouraged enrollment: these students had already decided they were going to attend Delgado or Louisiana Technical College and, upon orientation, learned about this particular scholarship opportunity.

We evaluated the scholarship using a random assignment design. Evaluation is important because it helps inform what works and what does not. Understanding what works is important because it facilitates the efficient allocation of funds. I am an economist by training, and economics is the study of the allocation of scarce resources. So it is important to allocate resources in such a way that you are funding things that have shown a measure of efficacy and effectiveness. This is not to say that other programs that are not evaluated are not useful, but it is to say that large scale disbursements should be done in an efficient manner. Random assignment helps one understand causality. As Thomas Bailey mentioned earlier, it alleviates the burden of proving whether something in a student's history determined an outcome or not.

So, this diagram [*see Figure 1*] explains random assignment. What it does is take the universe of students eligible for the scholarship and inform them about the scholarship, and, if they are interested, we collect baseline information about them. So these are the basic demographics about them—age, sex, parental education, reason for attending college, etc. And

Low-income students who were parents were given \$1,000 per semester for two semesters that was paid out in increments based on achievement.

Part of the goal was to determine how to allocate resources to maximize effectiveness.

the reason we do that is that we are interested in verifying that our groups—those students who end up receiving the scholarship and those students who do not—are essentially the same. Random assignment should ensure that these groups are comparable on all observables. After that point that we collect information, we randomly assign the students, which means that there is a fifty-fifty chance, or a lottery, that the student will receive the scholarship or not. At the end of the day, we compare outcomes between those students who received the scholarship and those students who did not. Any difference between those outcomes can be assigned with confidence to the offer of the scholarship, as opposed to background characteristics—something that is not easily accomplished when you are doing an evaluation that is not using this methodology.

The study aimed to find out both if and why performance-based scholarships increased persistence and retention.

We are interested in several questions, not only whether performance-based scholarships increase persistence and retention, but also why. So, how is a program implemented? Were the students actually monitored and counseled? What exactly happened to help generate those impacts? In addition, we are interested in cost. Is this something that can be easily replicated? In addition to the cost of the actual scholarship amounts, are there implementation costs that are involved?

Today, I will focus solely on our early impact findings. And before I do that, I want to explain the effect of Hurricane Katrina on our findings. As I mentioned, we started our study in 2003, and we ended in 2005. As you will recall, in August 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Louisiana area, and our colleges are located in New Orleans. Many students lived in the 9th Ward specifically. Over 80 percent of our students lived in the 9th Ward, which was one of the wards most devastated by the hurricane. As a result, we had to suspend our study, and, therefore, we have analyzed (what I am going to present today) the first two cohorts: information over three semesters. So, what this diagram [*see Figure 2*] shows you is the effect of Katrina. That vertical line is the implementation of Katrina, and what we have is solid evidence on our students before that. Close to 75 percent of our students moved out of the area after Katrina, but we have managed to locate most of them through surveys. The majority of the students relocated to the Houston, Texas area.

The study began in 2003, but was suspended due to Hurricane Katrina.

What I am showing you now [*see Figure 3*] are early findings from those first two cohorts. What the tables show are the outcomes in registration for the treatment (those students who received the scholarship) compared to the control group (those students who were eligible, but randomly assigned not to receive the scholarship). And as I mentioned, the difference between those two groups can be attributed entirely to the offer of a scholarship. So what you see under registration is that in the first semester there is no difference between the two groups, and that is as it should be, because recall that I said this was not a program to increase

enrollment, it was a program to increase persistence and retention. The students had already decided to matriculate, and, therefore, there should be no difference between first semester registrations; all of the students intended to register first semester. However, when you look at the second semester, you see that there is an 18 percentage point difference, indicating that the program changed behaviors of the recipients who received the scholarship. Fifty-seven percent of those students went on to register for the second semester compared to roughly 40 percent of the students who had not received the scholarship. These impacts continued into the third semester, and, recall, this is the semester at which the scholarship ended. The scholarship was only a two-semester intervention, yet, in the third semester, students who received the scholarship were 11 percentage points more likely to attend. If you look at the number of courses passed, treatment group students were more successful in their courses. In addition they earned more credits each semester that they were registered. Cumulatively, students in the program group attended more semesters and earned about four credits more than their control-group counterparts, so our treatment group students managed to gain a quarter of a semester.

Students who received the scholarship registered for a second semester of college at a higher rate than non-scholarship students.

What I have not shown you is that there were other effects of the scholarships. For example, although all students intended to matriculate (and I showed you evidence that they did, equally), students who received the scholarship were more likely to attend full-time, rather than part-time, giving some evidence that receiving these additional monies allowed them to either cut back their work hours or afford additional child care to allow them to take 12 credits instead of less than that amount. So, we interpret these findings as suggesting that academic performance increases by having a scholarship tied to performance, and that the scholarship is effective for students who were not necessarily the cream of the crop, but students at different stages of their lives who may not have performed well in high school, but who have decided that college may be for them. In fact, some of our implementation research suggests that many of the students who received the scholarships and did well were actually students who did very poorly in high school. One young lady in particular finished high school with her GED, did not do well in high school at all, and, upon receiving the scholarship through the program, found that just the term “scholarship” was motivational. She ended up having a 4.0 GPA and felt as though she could “do college,” she could be educated. Just that extra boost of receiving the money—special money—helped, in ways other than financial.

Students who received the scholarship were more likely to attend full time.

While Katrina has compromised the study and the results that we are able to draw, we are still able to track employment and other outcomes. And, as I mentioned, we have managed to find close to 80 percent of the

students post-Katrina and have fielded a survey asking them about their outcomes and employment after Katrina.

There are plans to replicate this scholarship in New York and, possibly, New Mexico, Arizona, Ohio, and Washington.

Because I am a researcher as well, I feel there is future work—the survey I mentioned. We are working on a 12-month report that will report findings in addition to transcript outcomes. We have survey information and information on mobility patterns (whether students have registered at colleges outside of Louisiana), and we are in the process of trying to replicate this scholarship in other venues. It could be the case that Louisiana was a particular place at a particular time that resulted in these impacts, so we are in the process of replicating this in New York. We have received funding from the Robin Hood Foundation to implement the scholarship in two community colleges, and we are looking to extend that to two upstate community colleges—the Robin Hood funding is to focus on New York City colleges. And that is interesting because we get the opportunity to study the same population—the same potential population of low-income parents—in a different venue, in a different state, with a different financial aid system, as well as an urban environment. New York State has a very generous financial aid system relative to Louisiana, but the amount of unmet need is similar, surprisingly. We have also had interest in replicating the scholarship in New Mexico at the University of New Mexico, which is a non-selective four-year college. We are having discussions with Arizona, Ohio, and Washington State about a replication there as well. Thank you.

Mr. David Prince
Assistant Director
Research and Analysis
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is piloting the *Student Success Initiative* to increase persistence levels.

Mr. Prince discussed the *Student Success Initiative*, a new incentive program that the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is piloting to increase student persistence levels. This initiative rewards institutions for meeting benchmarks in key areas related to student persistence.

Testimony. Washington State’s 34 community and technical colleges enjoy strong support from both the governor and the state legislature, internally, and, externally, we have benefited from a number of wonderful partnerships, several of which are represented here today. We have worked closely with Columbia, and we have also worked with Jobs for the Future on projects that stem from the Ford Foundation, SPARK, the *Bridges to Opportunity Project*, and *Achieving the Dream*, so we have had a lot of support. All of this is probably engendered by the fact that we

have a good student tracking system. We can look at our students throughout the community college system. We can track them to any college within the system. We can track them into the labor market. We can follow them as they move into four-year institutions. So, the tracking system is what allows us to explain our story, and that is what allows us to get support for our story.

There have been a couple of studies that have been critical in helping with this. Several years ago we did a tracking study of students, in which, with Columbia and Davis Jenkins, we looked at working-age adults aged 25 and older with a high-school education or less. We asked two questions: how far did you get in your education in five years, and what are you earning in the sixth year? And from that study we identified what we call a “tipping point,” which I will explain a little bit later. But the study basically said that, for that population of students, obtaining at least a year’s worth of college-level credit and a credential was important in getting the largest earning gains in that sixth year.

We also did another study that looked at our students from the point of view of socioeconomic status, again with Columbia, where we took census information, geo-coded our students into the census, and looked at the socioeconomic status of our student body within the state. We are often asked the question, not who is benefiting from financial aid, or who is getting financial aid, but who does not get financial aid, and that is a very large question for us. From that perspective, we looked at our population and saw two groups: older, nontraditional-aged students, 25 and older and younger students under 25 years of age. We saw a very disconcerting fact that came out of that. If you are younger in our state, you come to us for transfer and you come to us for higher socioeconomic status; if you are older in our state, you come to us later, and you come to us with a basic education for worker re-training or workforce education. We also looked at the population of our state in 1990-2000 and saw that the very young students and the very young families were increasingly of low socioeconomic status. The demographics of our state are changing: it is becoming more diverse, and families, particularly those of color, are the larger families, and they were also of lower socioeconomic status given the fact that they would historically come to us later. That is a bit of a problem for us.

So all of those, then, frame a series of issues over the past year, and that led to what I am going to talk about today. And that is an incentive system for increasing achievement across the board for all of our students. Let me give you a bit of background on it. First of all, this comes out of a vision statement of our board. We call it a system direction; it is not really a strategic plan, it is a bit less formal than that. But, basically, that vision statement talks about raising the knowledge and skills of the state’s

Obtaining at least a year’s worth of college-level credit acts as a “tipping point” for student persistence.

The demographics of the state are changing; it is becoming more diverse and more students are low-income.

residents. And that it refers to the state's residents is particularly important because to us it means—it does not talk about students coming to us for transfer, it does not talk about students coming for basic skills, it does not talk about students coming for workforce education—it talks about the state's residents as a whole. So how do we look at that, and how do we treat that in terms of our student body, which is about 500,000 students a year across the state?

An incentive program was developed to reward community colleges for improvement in student achievement.

That direction had three goals, and it is the bold goal that I am going to talk about today because that is what the system direction and this incentive system is about. It is about achieving increased educational attainment for all residents across the state. What I am talking about today focuses on just one of these goals that is critical to what we think will be helpful in student success. Often times, in trying to measure improvement, success, and performance, we have felt, and we have heard from other national experts, that you try to measure too much. You try to measure everything, and, in effect, you change nothing. So we are focusing on one very specific goal. There are other plans for the other goals, but we are focusing on one very specific goal and looking at how we can measure that over the next five-year period.

Given that goal, our board challenged us to develop an incentive system that rewards colleges for improvement in student achievement. There are a couple of inflammatory words in there: one of them is incentive, and I'll talk a little bit more about it, and, of course, the other is increasing student achievement—how are you going to define that? Given the nature of those terms and given the task we were given, we determined a year-long process to develop this system, directed by our board. It involved college presidents as well, and they were the taskforce group, the decision-makers assigned the task to come up with a recommendation to the full state board. We also had a system advisory group that we referred to as a 'Noah's Ark' because it represented all factions of the system, all levels of the system, and was asked to give input on and feedback to final measures. The final measures were taken to this taskforce to vote on and recommend to the full board for approval.

One of the principles of the system was that the measures should recognize students in all mission areas and reflect diverse communities served by colleges.

One of the first tasks with any issue of this nature is to begin with principles on which everybody can agree. I will describe what some of those principles were when we began this process and then returned to throughout when we had discussions such as, "well I think we should be doing this," or, "I think we should be doing that." One of the principles was that the measures should recognize students in all mission areas and reflect diverse communities served by colleges. Throughout the presentations today, we have heard people refer to younger and older students. Typically speaking, folks think of traditional-aged students when we talk about issues such as those that are before you today,

although references have been made to the other groups as well. We have been able to make a strong case for the older student, too. In fact, when we look at our socioeconomic studies, when we look at our state, and when we look at the education of our workforce today, we find that the population of working-age adults with less than an associate's degree and with a high school education (including non-English speakers) is about as big as the next ten graduating high school classes. When that fact is pointed out, eyes usually open up. And those people will be in the workforce for 20, 30 years to come—so when the question comes up, “where is tomorrow's workforce going to come from,” the answer we usually give is, “well, they are working for you today.”

We are looking for a system that reflects all of our students. We are looking for a system that will result in educational attainment reaching the tipping point and beyond. The tipping point has become, I guess, our marketing term and has resonated quite well within our state. But basically it is really a three-legged stool. It comes out of that initial study of working-age adults, and it says that they need at least a year's worth of college-level work. That figure was picked for several reasons. One is the earnings that accrued to workers in that sixth year, another is that employers are looking for people with sub-baccalaureate credentials, and the third is that that level of education will allow the student, if they reach it, to go further. It provides them enough of a base—it is that first-year college experience others have described—that they can go further. And so, some of the efforts that have come out of what we are working toward include such things as applied baccalaureate degrees: more baccalaureate options for people with workforce diplomas or degrees; ways to combine basic instruction with college-level credit work, including non-English speakers; and a new form of financial aid called opportunity grants that our state legislature is funding. But that tipping point is our twenty-second sound bite way of saying this is the minimal goal that we are aiming at.

That measures have to be simple and understandable is another of the principles that we work toward. The measures have to be something that can be influenced by the colleges on a timely basis. We are typically looking for measures that can be input to a data system the colleges have, in which they can look at students in real time, and see students at the beginning of the quarter, the end of the quarter, and ask a variety of questions about student progress toward the measures. And then the colleges and the system can use the momentum points (that is what we call these measures) as evidence of promising practices and support and develop strategies for improving achievement. All of this, ultimately, is linked to what is done in the classroom, student services, and so forth. These measures become a way for colleges to look at students and identify real interventions for actual students. They can find similar students who

The goal is to find a system that will result in more students reaching and surpassing the educational persistence tipping point.

The system measures must be simple, easily implemented, and tracked in a data system.

are not receiving these interventions. They can see the difference these interventions are making in terms of the momentum points students are generating as they move through college.

Four categories of measures were created to propel students toward certificates, degrees, and college transfer.

We look for measures that are research-based, and a number of our transcript-based measures come out of Clifford Adelman's work or are our interpretations of his work. We worked with Columbia, giving them our data and looking at our data ourselves, to see what we wanted to use. We look at measures of age, race, income, full- and part-time enrollment, and mission area that can be tested in such a way that none of them represents an advantage or disadvantage for one area over the other. Colleges can then pick and choose depending on their local needs; they will not be disadvantaged by this system. We look for key points that will propel students toward certificates, degrees, and college transfer. We are not including in our measures college transfer itself, nor employment. We look for things that can be influenced by the college in real time. Over time though, as we evaluate the program with Columbia, we will look at the impacts on employment and transfer.

The first measures are points that build toward college-level skills, such as passing through sequences of pre-college writing and math courses.

So we came up with four categories of measures. The first are points that build toward college-level skills. From that we came up with students who are furthest from the starting line: students who are in adult basic education and English As a Second Language, one of the college's critical missions. Here we are looking at pre- and post-test score improvement on standardized tests; we are looking at the earning power of a GED. In terms of pre-college or developmental instruction, we are looking at passing through sequences of pre-college writing and math courses as well. These measures are probably the least connected, research-wise, to college success. The critical point for basic skills students is transitioning to college-level work itself, but so few students do so that if we created that as a measure then we would be creating a disincentive. So here we operate under the supposition that people do have to increase their basic skills to move along. We are going to give them credit for that. But, as we look at impacts, we will look seriously at whether these create transition for students. The database system that we have created allows an examination of where students are in terms of their basic skills development. We know, from some of our other work, what the optimal levels are in order for people to move on. So from this, any college can determine how many students are at that optimal level, and ask, what am I doing with that? College success courses, exploratory courses, and other methods of instruction are designed to move people along more quickly. If people have not met those basic goals, what can the college do to get them to those optimal levels? These are all things people can see in real time with these databases.

Other categories are transcript-based measures. Because we are based on a quarter system, earning 15 college-level credits is the matriculation point for our students. How many students do you have who are at that point? How many students do you have who should be at that point? This is regardless of students' program, purpose, or intent. The measures look at all of our students because their purpose is to create and to relate to achievement across the board. So, if students are not at this point, they benefit from success courses or exploratory courses. If students are at this point, that is, commencing, if they plan on transferring or moving on, it still is providing a huge payoff in terms of being able to move forward. Earning the first 30 college level credits moves that person closer to that first year.

The last category is completions: certificates, associate's degrees, apprenticeship training, and other things that are awarded within our system. Examining these key points creates multiple opportunities to work with folks who are more disadvantaged, or who are less college ready. The more college ready you are, the more capable you are, and the more quickly we assume you will move through the system without our help, so there are fewer points on the curve for that kind of student. What colleges are looking at, and what they are being measured against are their total points and improvement on their total points from year to year. What that enables a college to do is pick the area and the students that it wants to work with—we are not dictating that.

The funding proposal attached to this has a controversial side. It is not a large sum of money in the beginning: \$500,000 and 34 colleges in the beginning. The money goes into the colleges' base—once they earn it, they keep it forever, so to sustain the effort, you have to ask for more money. A fairly large legislative request for next year is creating some interest, angst, and consternation. One of the purposes from the state board's point of view is the philosophical point of moving some of the colleges' funding away from enrollment to student outcomes. In this funding proposal, colleges compete against themselves, so it is a continuous self-improvement system. The funding is distributed based on the level of improved student achievement represented by those total points. And we would like this funding to be reliable and predictable over time, so that once a college earns it, it stays in their base.

Next steps: we are currently in a learning year. Our board has approved the plan, and we are marching forward with it. The learning year is one of trying to penetrate more deeply into the system; we had a very large task force and a lot of talk about it, but things do not become real until they are real. This is the year that it is real, and a large part of this will be communicating and working with folks to make sure that we are all working together to use this data, and that we bridge from this data to

Other measures include completing 15 or 30 college-level credits, a certificate, training or associate's degree.

Colleges are measured against their improvement from year to year.

Funding is distributed based on the level of improved student achievement.

understand good practices. We can share these practices because this is not competing against another college. So it is a year about getting this data out—introducing this new database and reporting on a quarterly basis, as well as engaging faculty, students, and staff; identifying target groups; developing strategies; and seeing how people are learning from this data and what they are doing with it. The first performance year is next year, and that is when that \$500,000 comes into play. The first rewards are at the end of that year and then the step after that is planning the evaluation with Columbia and analyzing the actual impacts in years three and five. If there are any questions, I would be happy to answer them. Thank you.

Mr. Richard Kazis
Senior Vice President
Jobs for the Future

Mr. Kazis discussed Jobs for the Future’s work through *Achieving the Dream* to create state policy that effectively promotes student persistence. He commented on the various approaches that the 15 states involved in the project have taken to reach that goal.

Testimony. Our organization, Jobs for the Future (JFF), is one of the partners in *Achieving the Dream*, which is a national initiative that I am going to explain. We manage the state policy work in that initiative, so I will give you a sense of the trends across the 15 states that are involved. That means what are they trying to do, what are they grappling with, and what are the hot issues in terms of policies to support student success? That does not necessarily mean what they are successfully doing, it means what they are trying to do. A lot of times in state policy you move on and do not look back and say, did it work? But you will see that what the states are grappling with is very consistent with the kinds of things that the panelists have talked about so far.

Jobs for the Future is working through *Achieving the Dream* to create state policy that promotes student persistence.

The first couple of slides are on, “What is *Achieving the Dream*?”, a national initiative to help community college students succeed—funded by Lumina and 18 other foundations. Now, success is defined through particular metrics that the colleges involved are trying to reach—they are trying to assess their students’ completion of developmental education and gatekeeper courses, as well as completion of credentials, certificates, and degrees. The goal is not to be prone to programitis, but to focus on institutional change across the colleges involved, change that is informed by student achievement data. Eighty-four colleges in 15 states are involved in the demonstration phase of the initiative.

What does it mean for a college to participate in *Achieving the Dream*? It gets a planning and implementation grant over a period of five years. The initiative helps colleges develop and implement strategies to improve student success through coaching and through data facilitation—tools that help colleges focus on success, some of which are strategies discussed already today. There is also a research component—the Community College Research Center and MDRC are involved in that. There is a public policy component, and that is where JFF comes in. And there is a public engagement component led by a public agenda. So this is a big, multi-year, multi-partner, multi-state initiative looking hard at how increased student success is supported, particularly for low-income and minority students at community colleges.

Community college student success should be an explicit public policy goal.

In terms of state policy goals, when the initiative started a few years ago we identified three goals. Now these sound like fairly obvious things. Community college student success should be an explicit public policy goal—well, in how many states is it really an explicit public policy goal right now? How about—states should routinely use student outcome data to inform their decision-making and policy-making? Enough said. And, also, states should implement specific policy changes that promote the success of under prepared students; that is what we will get to right now.

These are the five major areas of state activity in *Achieving the Dream*. These were identified, refined, and negotiated by the states involved. The first one is clear public policy commitment for student success. Second, and where a lot of the activity is in the first couple of years, strong data and accountability systems. The third is improving alignment across education systems, including alignment between K-12 and Higher Ed and between two-year and four-year colleges. The fourth is creating incentives and strategies for state support for improving success for underprepared students. This takes us into the kinds of things that David Prince was just talking about and the student success courses that Thomas Bailey was talking about. The fifth concerns financial aid policies, but, in particular, financial aid policies that promote persistence like those that Lashawn Richburg-Hays was discussing. In truth, the states are spending most of the focus of their activity now on data and accountability systems; on alignment, particularly in K-12; and on developmental education and transfer. Financial aid has been less of a focus in the states to date.

***Achieving the Dream* focuses on state public policy goals, data and accountability systems, state support, and financial aid policies.**

In terms of data systems, as I said, this is where a lot of the activity and a lot of the energy is. Some states in this initiative have no consistent, coherent state-level community college data—Pennsylvania and Michigan, for example. Some of the states are trying to figure out how to put together a student data system that is longitudinal, involves all the colleges, and is consistent and of high quality. Other states have some of this, and they are trying to link unconnected databases, so they might be

trying to link K-12 and higher education, or bring in the workforce system, or connect to the labor market information in the state. Increasingly, states are trying to figure out where adult basic education data can come in. Yet other states have a certain amount of data, or a lot of data, and they are trying to figure out how to help colleges and the state system increase capacity to use data smartly. For example, they are trying to use data for improvement and to use it strategically in the way the Florida and Washington State data described earlier has been used.

Several states are part of a cross-state data project to improve performance measurement systems.

A number of states in the initiative have joined together. Seven to ten of them are participating in a cross-state data project that is trying to identify intermediate measures of progress—not just the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) measures and not just the measures at the end of the road, but intermediate measures that would potentially be like Washington State’s momentum points—particularly important and useful data points for the progress of students who enroll without being college-ready. So there has been a lot of activity among states trying to improve their performance measurement systems. Changes in state accountability measures have been influenced by this initiative, particularly accountability measures that track the progress of developmental education students and, increasingly, ABE students as well. David Prince just spoke on the lead that Washington State is taking with its *Student Achievement Initiative* and that other states are circling around—they are not as far along as Washington. Arkansas has a legislative task force. Hawaii, Virginia, and other states are trying to look at how politics play out in their state on these issues.

A number of states are exploring how to improve college readiness and alignment with K-12.

A huge area of concern, interest, and work now is in the area of college readiness and alignment with K-12. That train is moving very fast in many states in terms of how college readiness is defined, such that community college systems involved in *Achieving the Dream* are starting to say, “Well we have got to be on that train.” A number of states are exploring readiness feedback or have feedback mechanisms they are trying to strengthen: giving college placement tests to high school students, and providing better and more user-friendly high school feedback reports.

The big issue in terms of K-12 alignment is that of standards, particularly statewide standardization of placement tests and cut scores. Some states have moved in that direction, others are debating it, and others are being forced to debate it by their legislatures. It raises a dilemma that we will not have time to go into now, but I will put it out here for you: where should community college set the bar for Accuplacer and Compass tests? It is a different issue from the perspective of K-12 or college readiness. Yes, there are internal reasons for wanting that kind of standardization, but how do you line up American Diploma Project efforts with these efforts to

get more consistency across the state on placement tests? This is a big issue—one worth spending more time on.

I am going to let other people talk about transfer issues. I am going to end with one slide on financial aid and financial aid issues. There is, increasingly, a recognition or an interest in financial aid strategies that are not just opening up more money, but that are tying aid to strategies to increase and improve persistence like the *Opening Doors* initiative. One thing that we have seen is that a number of states like Connecticut have been able to centralize their aid systems in terms of tracking financial aid students and administering financial aid. These states had been working college by college, through different data systems. By centralizing, they have been able to see a real bump in aid take-up. Virginia is trying to learn from that, and they might do something similar.

There is an increasing interest in financial aid strategies to increase and improve persistence.

Another dilemma that I want to raise, and on which I will end, is also worthy of further parsing out, and that is: if you talk to people who are focused on adult workers and financial aid, they will say, “Well, the issue is, we have got to get more financial aid to open up for part-time students.” If you talk to people who are focused on the traditional student, they will say, “Well, where is there a big break in student success or probability of success? How full-time are these students?” So these two things need to get sorted out. What is the right amount of aid to part-time students that does not encourage people to attend so infrequently that they do not make progress? You get the idea.

So, I’m going to leave that there, and you will come back to these issues in your deliberations. If you need more information about *Achieving the Dream* or Jobs for the Future, there are websites. Thank you.

Dr. Angela Oriano-Darnall
Project Coordinator
Survey of Entering Student Engagement
Community College Survey of Student Engagement

CCSSE is a national survey that gauges student engagement at community colleges.

Dr. Oriano-Darnall discussed how community colleges are using data from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) to measure student engagement and to design policies and programs that increase student persistence. CCSSE is a national survey gauging the engagement of students at participating colleges, including faculty interaction and the use of school centers and services, among other things. The data collected is made public and colleges are able to use the data to determine areas for improvement.

Testimony. I am here as a representative of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, also known as CCSEE. My job today is to provide you with an overview of CCSSE and how community colleges are using CCSSE data to improve student outcomes.

Community colleges are using CCSSE data to improve student outcomes.

CCSSE was founded in 2001 as the community college companion to NSSE, which is the National Survey of Student Engagement. We are housed as a part of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin, and our program is directed by Dr. Kay McClenney. With the completion of our fifth annual administration in the spring of 2007, CCSSE has been administered at almost half of the community colleges in the country—a fact of which we are extremely proud. And, in addition, nearly 20 states and statewide systems are committed to using CCSSE as part of their accountability and improvement strategies. In addition to the core survey, which is what I will talk to you about today, we also perform a faculty survey, which is an online survey administered to faculty at CCSSE’s participating community colleges. We are also developing a new survey, which is my project; it is called SENSE—the Survey of Entering Student Engagement. Unlike CCSSE, which is administered in the spring, the new survey is administered in the fall, at the end of the entering students’ third week.

CCSSE is a paper and pencil survey administered at the classroom level. It is rooted in empirical research that shows that engagement matters. CCSSE items focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that we know promote student engagement. And some of you may be wondering, what is student engagement? Well, simply put, it is the time and effort that students spend invested in meaningful educational practices. All CCSSE data are publicly reported via our website, where we have a powerful search capability, so I encourage you all, at some point, to visit www.CCSSE.org to take a look at it, where our results are reported in terms of five educational benchmarks, rooted in research.

CCSSE focuses on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement.

From its inception, CCSSE has been committed to publicly reporting data in an effort to provide information about effective educational practices within community colleges in order to assist not only colleges, but policymakers in using this information to promote improvements in student learning and retention. And, ultimately, we endeavor to alter the national discourse about what constitutes quality in community college education—in fact, we would argue, in all of higher education. And that is based on the belief that quality judgments should be made on systematically collected, mission-related, and actionable data. Having said that, we support benchmarking, which is making appropriate comparisons between institutions, but we do not support CCSSE data being used for rankings.

As I mentioned earlier, there are five CCSSE data benchmarks, and these benchmarks allow colleges to compare themselves to other like institutions. They are listed here, and let me tell you that we also report students' responses to individual survey items in absolute terms. But the benchmarks are very important, and they are organized in groups of conceptually related items in key areas of student engagement. As I previously said, these benchmarks denote areas that educational research has shown to be important in quality and in educational practice. In 2006, we completed a validation study that confirmed that CCSSE benchmarks consistently exhibited a positive relationship with different student outcome measures and, therefore, that CCSSE data do provide community colleges with a valuable proxy for student achievement and persistence.

Community colleges can use this survey data to make a difference on their campuses.

I was asked to come today to tell you very briefly how community colleges can use this survey data to make a difference on their campuses. While there is no one way that community colleges may use CCSSE data, typically we would advise colleges to use the following steps: to start by looking at their survey results overall, to look at why the college performed well in certain areas and why it did not do so well in other areas, and to identify those differences and their possible causes. In addition, colleges should look at their data broadly, but then, of course, it is very important to disaggregate data. They should, perhaps, examine data on full- versus part-time students, credit hours earned, ethnicity, age, and other demographic factors. [See *related charts in Appendix C.*]

Once they have done so, the colleges should focus their attention on those educational practices, programs, and policies that need improvement, and, frankly, also on those worthy of celebration. Often times we talk about what colleges are not doing well, but our community colleges are doing good work. Once the data has been examined, the benchmarking ability allows colleges to look at peer institutions to see what others did relatively well in various areas. Through site visits and dialoging with their colleagues, they can learn what is working well at other campuses and bring those policies, procedures, and practices back to their own institutions. In addition, we encourage colleges to use CCSSE in conjunction with other student outcome data to learn more about different experiences that different types of students are having on their campuses.

Colleges can identify and implement successful practices.

Finally, let me talk to you very specifically about the five benchmarks and strategies that community colleges have reported to us that they have initiated, undertaken, and/or are using CCSSE data to measure. Looking at the first benchmark, which is active and collaborative learning, some colleges have used their CCSSE data to develop learning communities, or small group strategies, which some of my colleagues have talked about earlier today; to conduct faculty learning institutes and workshops; and to help instructors learn to be more effective in using these strategies in their

classrooms. Colleges have reported to us that they were lucky enough to be building new spaces or redesigning spaces and that they have purposefully and thoughtfully created spaces that would encourage students to work together collaboratively. And finally, some institutions are encouraging, or in some cases, requiring, faculty to continually investigate how effective they are in their own classrooms. And while CCSSE does not do that, CCSSE is useful in initiating that conversation.

Some colleges have used their CCSSE data to develop learning communities and conduct faculty learning workshops.

The second benchmark is student effort, or, in other words, trying to evaluate how much time and effort students are putting into their studies. Colleges have reported to us—and again, there are lots of strategies that go beyond those that I am sharing with you today—for example, that they are using CCSSE data in developing their writing instruction. One college indicated that students are now required to revise in the writing process. You would think that it would be expected, right? In fact, that is not always the case. So, at this college, they are revising all along in each class, maintaining portfolios at every level of writing so that competency can be evidenced at the end. In addition, community colleges are requiring skill labs for developmental students. It is something that developmental students ought to do if they are in a developmental writing, math, or English course, but as a result of CCSSE data, colleges have indicated that they are requiring skill labs and also requiring or encouraging participation in other academic learning or support services, such as tutoring, supplemental learning instruction, learning skills, etc.

In terms of the third benchmark, academic challenge, community colleges are using CCSSE data to develop core standards and competencies for all courses. Another example is requiring students to earn a particular grade in a developmental course. In this case, a ‘B,’ before moving on to the next level. And Tallahassee Community College recently indicated that they had used CCSSE data as the impetus for revising their entire general education curriculum, specifically to strengthen critical thinking skills.

Community colleges are using CCSSE data to develop core standards and competencies for all courses.

The fourth CCSSE benchmark is student-faculty interaction, and you see colleges using CCSSE data to increase the interaction between students and faculty by creating opportunities for students to work together on service learning or other projects. Sometimes faculty are required to devote a percentage of their time to academic advising, which we know is very important for students. LaGuardia Community College, for example, has implemented ‘common reading,’ which is where all faculty, students, and sometimes staff, read the same book. That creates tremendous opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to interact through this common reading. And, finally, colleges have established faculty office hours, as well as discipline-based tutoring at scheduled times.

Our research shows that the fifth benchmark, not surprisingly, is most strongly correlated with student persistence, and that is support for learners. That is related to everything we have heard earlier today—not only this session, but the previous session as well. We know that it is important. I think someone in the last session closed with a quote from Vincent Tinto about setting high expectations. That is important, and our colleges are doing it as a result of their CCSSE data. Colleges are eliminating late registration; mandating academic assessment and placement; requiring orientation; beginning to require student success or student development courses, as Tom Bailey discussed earlier; and implementing early warning and referral systems.

In addition to that, let me tell you that CCSSE is not just a survey. We work very closely with colleges. We are a resource for the field. We conduct workshops onsite at community colleges for all of our state systems. We do statewide workshops. With the new survey—the Survey of Entering Student Engagement—we will be conducting two-and-a-half day workshops for colleges participating in that survey. The website is phenomenal—so I encourage you to go to the website and check out all of the tools. We have tools to help colleges conduct focus groups with their students because we know just looking at our data is not enough. We help colleges learn how to talk to their students and faculty, and to go deeper into the data. We have a number of communication toolkits that are very helpful for initiating and maintaining the internal conversation about why quality matters. We also publish, periodically, CCSSE highlights in which we share promising and good practices. We are a partner in several national projects—Tinto’s pathways project, MDRC, and *Achieving the Dream*. We are also partnering with the Advisory Committee for the CCSSE 2008 administration in developing five additional questions on student financial aid. And for my project, the Survey of Entering Student Engagement, we will have a module that was developed in conjunction with your staff. We were grateful for the opportunity and for their input.

In closing, I would be remiss if I did not ascend to my community college soapbox. As we have all heard today, community college students arrive at our doors with an impressive array of educational goals and aspirations, along with stunning variations of academic preparedness, which are too often coupled with daunting financial and personal challenges. Plainly put, it is imperative for both individuals and society that community colleges perform their work, arguably the most important work we have done in our nation, with high levels of commitment and quality. CCSSE, along with its companion surveys, resources, and our colleagues in the field, endeavors to be a key partner in helping community colleges to do just this. Thank you.

CCSSE research shows that support for learners is most strongly correlated with student persistence.

CCSSE offers workshops at community colleges and helps colleges learn how to talk to their students and faculty.

Practices to Ensure Persistence

From the testimony of the panelists and a review of the literature, five major practices that ensure persistence have emerged: valuing persistence as a goal, aligning curriculum and standards, developing efforts to support student learning, creating student data systems, and ensuring adequate financial resources. These five practices are interconnected, as it is difficult to positively influence persistence if any one of these elements is missing. In addition, the network of support that these practices establish helps to address the complex needs of a diverse student population at community colleges. A comprehensive strategy to encourage student success that encapsulates all of these themes will effectively address the five major barriers mentioned above as well.

The testimony of the panelists and a review of the literature reveal five major practices that ensure persistence.

Value Persistence as an Important Goal

Without recognizing student persistence as an important mission of community colleges, it is unlikely that the focus of initiatives at the state or institutional level will change to reflect student success. For example, *Achieving the Dream* requires participating states to show that they are making a clear public policy commitment to student success, and the initiative is at the forefront of the national discussion on persistence at community colleges. This collaboration of states, philanthropic organizations, and higher education leaders has devised theories of action that will help more students succeed in community colleges. To this end, several states have included *Achieving the Dream* goals in their strategic plans (*Achieving the Dream* n.d.). The many colleges who are a part of this collaborative are exhibiting the type of public commitment to student success that is the integral first step to ensuring persistence.

States and institutions must value persistence as an important mission of the community college.

Once the priority of addressing persistence is recognized, an action plan must be drafted that includes input from all relevant stakeholders. Washington State realized a need for more highly skilled workers, and saw the value of utilizing the state's community colleges to meet the demand. The state's *Student Success Initiative* was created with the input of members of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, community colleges, and researchers. The *Student Success Initiative* rewards community colleges for meeting certain benchmarks related to persistence, benchmarks created by reviewing relevant research and similar plans in other states (Seppanen 2007; Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges n.d.).

Community college leaders must recognize the importance of student persistence to their institutions. By valuing persistence as the important

goal that it is, colleges can work with other stakeholders, including states, to implement plans that can affect multiple persistence barriers: academic, informational, and financial barriers, in particular. Programs such as the *Student Success Initiative* seek to address remediation, information, and other student needs as a method of increasing persistence.

Align Curriculum and Standards between K-12 and Higher Education

Better P-16 alignment would enable students to be more prepared to succeed in college. Panelists noted this as an important underlying factor related to their work. Students are sometimes unaware that they do not have the academic skills to be successful in college until they arrive on campus, due to expectations in high school inconsistent with college demands. Many organizations have noted the need for curricular and standards-based alignment between secondary and postsecondary education and are taking steps to help states work toward this goal (Achieve 2008; Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media, The Institute for Educational Leadership, and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education 2002).

The American Diploma Project, spearheaded by Achieve, is a coalition of states that are committed to alignment between K-12 requirements and the skills necessary to meet students' postsecondary plans. States involved have agreed to take formal steps to align expectations, curriculum, and assessments to ensure that students are prepared for postsecondary success. Indiana was one of the first states to be involved with the American Diploma Project's work, strengthening P-16 alignment through its *Core 40* proposal, which became the required high school curriculum in fall 2007. The *Core 40* is a set of curricular standards in every subject developed to equip students to meet the demands of either college or the workforce. Students who complete the *Core 40* requirements can also receive additional financial aid for college (Indiana Department of Education 2005). Although this initiative is geared towards preparing students for four-year colleges, the course of study suggested will aid any student who is on the pathway to earning a bachelor's degree.

New Hampshire has formed the Partnership for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education Research (NH PAPER n.d.) in response to the need for more P-16 alignment to meet the needs of students transitioning from secondary school to college. The group's mission is to "promote a research agenda to collect, study, analyze and disseminate information on trends and projects that impact postsecondary aspirations and participation" (NH PAPER n.d.). Alignment councils such as these can

Many organizations have noted the need for curricular and standards-based alignment between secondary and postsecondary education.

The American Diploma Project is a coalition of states that are committed to alignment between K-12 requirements and the skills necessary to meet students' postsecondary plans.

prove useful in determining what gaps in skills students have and finding solutions before problems that inhibit persistence become entrenched. Such solutions could include remediation, tutoring, and better preparation both prior to and at the beginning of students' postsecondary education.

Collaboration between secondary schools and the higher education community can help to improve curriculum and standards for students and decrease confusion about necessary college skills. In so doing, such alignment can ease academic, informational, and complexity barriers that students face and in so doing, may enable students to reach their educational goals in a shorter amount of time. In addition, the complexity of navigating an intimidating and unfamiliar setting would be mitigated.

Structuring support for students through remediation or additional services must be a key component of any persistence plan.

Develop Targeted Efforts to Support Student Learning

Given that more two-year than four-year college students enter underprepared, structuring support for them through remediation or additional services must be a key component of any persistence plan. Research has determined that students with the most social capital are more likely to utilize support services; therefore, colleges should both target resources to students who are most in need as well as be proactive in connecting students to the service rather than waiting for students to take the first step (Karp et al. 2008). Student success courses, learning communities, and other efforts that seek to integrate students into college life can also help students who are struggling academically (Zeidenberg et al. 2007; McClenney and Waiwaiole 2005).

Student success courses prepare students for the rigors of college life, teaching time management skills, and good study habits.

Student success courses prepare students for the rigors of college life, teaching time management skills, good study habits, and effective note-taking strategies. Students in these courses are also informed of and reminded about information specific to the school, such as important deadlines. Research on the effectiveness of these courses by the Community College Research Center showed that after controlling for student characteristics, those enrolled in student success courses in Florida Community Colleges were eight percent more likely to earn a credential. Among students who took remedial coursework, participation in the student success course was associated with a five percent increase in completion.

Similarly, the formation of learning communities as a response to remediation has been shown to improve retention (Tinto 1998). Learning communities have different formats, but a typical model includes groups of students who take the same bundle of courses from the same faculty members. Time is structured into the curriculum to meet for discussion

and extra preparation, sometimes in a format similar to student success courses. Faculty generally receive additional training and may be more accessible to these students than they would normally be to others. Though learning communities began in the four-year college setting, they are proving to be a promising and well-researched tool in community colleges (Bloom and Sommo 2005). Early results from a random demonstration study of learning communities at Kingsborough Community College, part of the CUNY system, found that these students are much more likely to pass developmental English and a writing test required for graduation (Bloom and Sommo 2005). Such students are also more likely to earn more total course credits (MDRC 2007).

Structuring developmental education in a way that is productive is important in ensuring success. Because extensive remediation can delay completion or cause students to become discouraged and drop out altogether, institutions must determine ways to give students necessary skills in an efficient manner. At Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) in Massachusetts, 87 percent of entering students need at least one developmental course, and over half require remediation in two or more subjects (Choitz 2006). To meet this demand, BHCC offers courses in different formats and on different schedules to accommodate student needs. Developmental courses are offered directly through the relevant academic department rather than through a central developmental education department. Counselors work with students to determine which course format works best for their personal learning needs. Though there are a variety of ways of structuring remedial education, the methods that Bunker Hill chose have produced results for its students. In 2001-02, 91 percent of students enrolled in either developmental English or reading remained enrolled throughout the course, and 70 percent earned a grade of 'C' or higher (Choitz 2006).

Developing quality developmental education must be a priority for any institution that wishes to move more students toward completion. A first step involves working with high schools to ensure that students have the skills necessary to begin college and to clarify which skills each student still needs to support their learning. Quality remediation can help students overcome the academic barriers they often face upon entering community college. Students also indicate that success courses benefit them by building relationships between peers and professors, which addresses social barriers; gaining direction with advising and planning, which addresses informational barriers; and obtaining necessary skills, which addresses academic barriers.

Structuring developmental education in a way that is productive is important in ensuring success.

There is growing awareness within the higher education community of this need to gather and utilize data to effect change.

Create and Utilize Student Data Systems

In order for institutions to be positioned to ensure persistence, they must be aware of skills students are missing and be able to track progress to determine which efforts are successful. There is growing awareness within the higher education community of the need to gather and utilize data to effect change (Goldberger 2007; Brock et al. 2007). Many states and institutions are working to create their own data systems or are working with external data systems to analyze the effectiveness of their efforts.

CCSSE acts as an external data system that enables community colleges to evaluate their success with the engagement level of their students.

The Community College Survey of Student Success (CCSSE) acts as an external data system that enables community colleges to evaluate their success with the engagement level of their students. Results are categorized under five benchmarks, developed by researchers and practitioners and related to educational practice, which institutions can use to improve student services and systems. The benchmarks are active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. Demographic information about students is also collected, and the survey results are made public, which allows schools to compare their progress to the progress of similar institutions. As a result of this input, CCSSE institutions have responded to persistence issues in a variety of ways, such as developing learning communities, referring students to participate in learning support programs, developing course competency standards, requiring orientation, and implementing early warning referral systems.

Targeted data on student engagement and involvement can identify possible solutions to social and informational barriers.

Both *Achieving the Dream* and the *Student Success Initiative* work to help institutions develop internal data systems. A key component of the *Achieving the Dream* initiative is using data to build a “culture of evidence” to improve systems for student success (Brock et al. 2007). *Achieving the Dream* works with colleges to help them collect, analyze, and use data at the institutional level. One of the state policy goals of the initiative is to routinely rely on student outcome data to inform decision making. Data on student success and institutional progress is also the foundation of Washington State’s *Student Achievement Initiative*. In order for Washington to carry out its incentive program, which rewards colleges for meeting certain student success benchmarks, colleges must have a valid data system in place to track student progress. Colleges within the state have spent this first year reinforcing those systems in preparation for full implementation, which will occur in the 2008-09 school year.

If colleges implement good data systems, they will be better equipped to provide students with needed information regarding necessary coursework for successful program completion, which could reduce complexity.

Enhanced data systems may also give institutions the capacity to quantify the academic barriers that students face, allowing for targeted academic advising or remediation. Furthermore, targeted data on student engagement and involvement can identify possible solutions to social and informational barriers, as evidenced by CCSSE. In fact, comprehensive data could also highlight financial solutions helpful to students; CCSSE has added financial aid questions to its spring 2008 assessment.

Ensure that Students have Adequate Financial Resources to Attend

Recent research suggests that need-based financial aid can increase persistence (Bettinger 2004; Seftor and Turner 2002). Preliminary results of some studies suggest that supplemental help with living costs can increase persistence, and indicate that Pell Grants may reduce drop-out rates (Brock and Richburg-Hayes 2006; Bettinger 2004). Both sets of findings indicate that finances play an important role in persistence at community colleges. Approaches to ensuring financial aid can take several forms: implementing aid initiatives linked to persistence, maximizing the efficiency of institutional systems, and distributing information on changes to federal programs.

An example of a student persistence initiative is the *Louisiana Opening Doors Program*, which was facilitated and evaluated by MDRC in collaboration with *Achieving the Dream*. The scholarship used TANF surplus monies to fund scholarships and support services for low-income parents. Participants were given \$1,000, in increments, in addition to any regular financial aid that the student would normally receive, for two terms. Monies were disbursed directly to students without stipulations on spending, which proved useful as follow-up research implied that many low-income students had trouble meeting regular living costs, such as child care or rent. This random assignment demonstration provided evidence that students respond well to scholarships provided on the basis of persistence benchmarks. Significantly more scholarship recipients persisted to a second semester than did regular students. Furthermore, even though the program ended after two semesters due to Hurricane Katrina, students who had previously received the scholarship were 11 percent more likely to attend a third semester. Overall, scholarship recipients earned about four more credits than students who did not.

Schools can do more to ensure that students can access financial resources available to them. Gateway Community College in Arizona is updating systems so that students have 24/7 access to their information online. To accomplish this, Gateway has made available electronic award letters, book vouchers, scholarship applications and authorization forms, loan

Recent research suggests that need-based financial aid can increase persistence.

Data from *Achieving the Dream* have shown better educational outcomes for students who receive Pell Grants than for those who do not.

entrance and exit counseling, loan master promissory notes, and a debt management system. The facility of these systems can decrease complexity for students. With these innovations, Gateway was able to process a far greater number of financial aid applications without increasing the size of the financial aid staff, resulting in 100 percent increase in the number of Pell Grant recipients (Gateway Community College 2004). Data from *Achieving the Dream* have shown better educational outcomes for students who receive Pell Grants than for those who do not, suggesting that Pell can affect persistence at community colleges (Brock et al. 2007).

Community college students will find additional financial relief through provisions of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007.

Community college students will find additional financial relief through provisions of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. The new law increases the income protection allowance, which protects the earnings of students who work to cover unmet financial need. In addition, the law has a provision that eliminates tuition sensitivity. Previously, the amount of Pell Grant funds for which students were eligible was tied to the level of tuition at their college of choice. This provision hurt many colleges with extremely low tuition costs, particularly affecting students at community colleges. These statutory changes in federal law could result in large increases in aid; however, many students and aid administrators may be unaware of these new policies. For this reason, colleges should take measures to inform students who are newly eligible for aid.

Finances are a barrier for students at the community college level. Even if colleges put all other best practices into place, such as aligning the curriculum, restructuring developmental education and student services, and implementing a comprehensive data system, the bottom line is that if students do not have the financial capability to continue in school, they will likely drop out. Ensuring that financial resources are available and accessible to students is critical to promoting student persistence and success.

Institutions and states need to take comprehensive approaches to ensure persistence.

Community college students are a diverse population and face a number of unique barriers to persistence. Due to this fact and the ever-fluctuating nature of state funding, institutions and states need to take comprehensive approaches to ensure persistence by re-evaluating institutional and state objectives and refocusing efforts in order to develop a workforce suitable for the 21st century.

FACILITATING TRANSFER

Background

Many students initially enroll in a community college with the specific intention of transferring to a four-year institution to attain a bachelor's degree; however, very few students make this transition. Less than 20 percent of college-qualified, low-income high school graduates in 1992 who enrolled in a two-year college with the intention of earning a bachelor's degree achieved that goal within eight years of high school graduation (ACSFAs 2006). But low- and moderate-income students should not be penalized for choosing an affordable path to a baccalaureate degree.

Low transfer rates can be attributed to the numerous challenges students face when attempting to transfer. Such challenges include inadequate transfer policies, insufficient academic preparation, and the need for financial aid. Moreover, research has shown that student characteristics known to adversely affect persistence and attainment, such as part-time enrollment, delayed enrollment, financial independent status, having financial dependents, single-parent status, working full-time, high school dropout status, or being a GED recipient, often prevent students from completing an education if specific policies impacting transfer are not in place (Price 2004; Long 2005). This phenomenon makes it imperative for community colleges and statewide systems to improve transfer efficiency and increase the number of community college students who attain bachelor's degrees.

In order to remain competitive in a global economy, America faces major demographic challenges that require improving access to and completion of a bachelor's degree for its citizens. While all sectors of the higher education community must play a role in helping the nation meet its educational and workforce needs, the community college with its open-access mission, proximity, and lower costs will be a leader in this effort. Transfer is particularly important as 31 percent of college-qualified low-income students enrolled in community colleges in 2004 (ACSFAs 2008), and students need to be encouraged to complete bachelor's degrees.

States and institutions have implemented myriad policies to address these issues, ranging from increased aid specifically for transfer students to the development of common course numbering systems to increase alignment, yet there are still significant barriers in the transfer process. Recognizing and responding to these barriers is a necessary component in facilitating student transfer from two-year to four-year colleges.

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Low transfer rates can be attributed to the numerous challenges or barriers students face when attempting to transfer.

Main Barriers

A lack of academic advising is a hindrance for students wishing to transfer from a community college to a four-year college.

Academic. A lack of academic advising is a hindrance for students wishing to transfer from a community college to a four-year college. Placement and matriculation policies may compound the problem as, without them, students may not declare a clear academic focus early or may not have enough guidance to help them reach goals (Shulock & Moore 2007). Academic advising guides students as they choose courses that count toward a degree program (Jenkins et al. 2006). However, according to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, students are not meeting with academic advisors at appropriate times over the course of their studies at the community college (CCSSE 2007).

Academic preparation is another key issue for community college students unprepared to transfer to a four-year college. Only 32 percent of students leave high school at least minimally prepared for college, an indicator of how lack of preparation can hinder success at the postsecondary level (Greene and Foster 2003). Preparation upon college entrance is often below what is required to succeed in college and varies with the background of the student. Adelman (1999) has found that students differ in terms of the courses taken and performance depending on their background. Significant gaps in test scores by income exist, indicating the need for better preparation at the community college level to help students succeed in transferring and completing a bachelor's degree.

Social commitments and cultural differences present significant barriers for students planning to transfer from a community college.

Social. Social commitments and cultural differences present significant barriers for students attending a community college. Almost half of community college students are over the age of 24 and are more likely to have family and work-related responsibilities (Martinez 2004). These nontraditional, or adult students, may delay enrollment, enroll part-time, work full-time, be financially independent, or have dependents—all of which are factors that make educational attainment and transfer more difficult (Spellman 2007). Twenty-one percent of community college students spend at least six hours per week commuting (CCSSE 2006). Managing multiple roles is particularly stressful for female students, who tend to keep their caregiver responsibilities while enrolled (Carney-Crompton and Tan 2002). Almost 85 percent of students at public two-year colleges work in addition to taking classes, and about 67 percent of them attend part-time (Wilson 2004; Hamm 2004).

Cultural differences can also deter student success in the community college for minority students, first-generation students, and international students, inhibiting them from applying and transferring to a four-year institution. These students may encounter cultural stereotypes, immigration problems, and language limitations when they attempt to further their education (Spellman 2007). Despite special services that may

be available at the college, students who face cultural barriers may refuse to use them, avoiding the associated stigma (Gary et al. 2004). ESL students may remain silent in courses when they do not feel comfortable with the language, impacting their prospects of improving skills and moving on to the next academic level.

Informational. According to CCSSE, more than one-third of students claimed they had not completed any course placement tests after a month in college, approximately half did not discuss educational goals with an advisor within the first month, and about one-third did not attend orientation (2007). These statistics indicate that students may lack the necessary information and guidance to adequately prepare for transfer. In addition, advising about the transfer process is sorely needed, and the lack of a transfer center at some community colleges perpetuates this problem. Additionally, some students may not understand the importance of transferring, as such a message may not have been emphasized when they first enrolled. Students need to know the offerings of a four-year college and the benefits of continuing an education.

Students may lack the necessary information and guidance to adequately prepare for transfer.

Information on the transfer process, along with information about financial aid, should be emphasized to encourage transfer from the day students begin at the community college. Lack of knowledge about aid policies that encourage transfer may inhibit students' ability to take the giant step of seeking to transfer or prevent persistence at the four-year institution (Long 2005). Students may also fail to explore options at schools that provide specific transfer scholarships and grants.

Complexity. Students who seek to transfer often find that lack of curricular alignment between institutions requires course repetition, creating layers of complexity for institutions and students alike. The frustration experienced and extra time required can be a hindrance to transfer and successful completion of a bachelor's degree (Long 2005). Furthermore, a lack of course coordination can discourage students from transferring at all (Wellman 2002). Many community college systems have responded to this problem by developing articulation agreements with four-year public and private colleges to ensure that various community college courses will be accepted at a higher rate. Some states are also currently working to align courses among institutional levels in higher education to ensure ease of transfer (Dougherty and Reid 2006). However, most states lack a common course numbering system that would better enable students to receive proper credit and, thereby, ease transfer.

A lack of curricular alignment between institutions requires course repetition, creating layers of complexity for institutions and students alike.

The multiple missions of community college can also contribute to the complexity that students face. Better coordination is needed among faculty and the curriculum in remedial, workforce, and academic transfer programs. These three programs tend to operate separately in most

community colleges, without providing guidance to students on how one component of their education affects other components (Jenkins 2003). The divisions among programs create additional barriers for students who wish to move from remedial or career-related programs into academic programs, further reducing their chance of transferring and obtaining a bachelor's degree. Such divisions can exacerbate problems students experience when attempting to complete an associate's degree within two years, further increasing costs.

The increased costs of a four-year college can be a significant impediment to transfer.

Financial. The increased costs of a four-year college can be a significant impediment to transfer. Tuition and fees at public flagship universities, on average, are more than 2.5 times the tuition and fees at community colleges (College Board 2007). Students who transfer also face additional costs, such as room and board, transportation, and other expenses, which can total \$10,000 on average (College Board 2007). If students already have unmet need at the community college level, they may become overwhelmed by these higher costs. Moreover, students who seek to transfer from a two-year to four-year institution often find that less institutional aid is available to them because such funds are often targeted at recruiting first-time, full-time students. Only a few states have created aid programs that encourage transfer (Long 2005; Wellman 2002).

In addition, many community college students work while they are in school and attempt to balance academics with work. For some students, the need to work increases the time and cost to degree. Working can also affect determination of need when they apply for financial aid at the four-year institution because income from the previous year affects expected family contribution for the following year. Despite the enactment of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, which increases the income protection allowance for students who work, many community colleges may have difficulty informing students of this change. Students who have not been eligible in the past may be unaware of their impending eligibility for federal aid.

Many students work while they are in school, which can increase the time and cost to degree.

Panelist Testimony

Session three panelists discussed efforts to improve the transfer process in the context of growing state and institutional awareness of the need for increased transfer from two-year to four-year institutions. The session highlighted successful efforts to improve the transfer process, including programs and practices at the institutional level, and state initiatives and legislation that facilitate transfer. Panelists also focused on the inequities facing many transfer students and the institutions that serve them, including transfer of credit, alignment, funding, stigma, and data collection measures by state and federal governments. These inequities

create multiple barriers—academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial—and serve to prevent community college students from obtaining baccalaureate degrees through transfer.

This session was moderated by Dr. Claude O. Pressnell, Jr. Prior to the panelist testimony, a representative for U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings provided remarks on the importance of community colleges and the Secretary’s priorities regarding them.

Ms. Diane Auer Jones
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department Of Education
Guest Speaker

Diane Auer Jones is the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. Ms. Jones spoke on behalf of Secretary Margaret Spellings, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and discussed the Department’s commitment to and work with community colleges.

Testimony. Thank you so much for the opportunity to participate in this symposium and to learn more about the important work that so many of you are doing to advance community colleges. The Secretary values the work of community colleges deeply, and so do I. In fact, I began my own career at a community college in Baltimore, teaching there for thirteen years, and, so, community colleges gave me a start to my own profession. I have seen first hand what an important role the community college plays for all kinds of students: 15-year-old home-schooled kids, 85-year-old returning adults, 45-year-old displaced homemakers, and my favorite, a gentleman who had been displaced from Bethlehem Steel. He had retired from Bethlehem Steel, and he had the hands of a retired steel worker. He had very big hands, very callous, and he ended up in my classroom one day because he wanted to become a NICU nurse. Jerry became a very good friend, and I helped him get back into college—he had been out for awhile. Actually, he had only taken one college class. And, you know, Jerry is now an ICU nurse. So I have seen firsthand what a difference community college makes in the lives of many people.

The community college also gave me my start in policy. I worked for Scott Giles on the Hill. But Scott was not the person who interviewed me. It was David Goldston. And when I went to the Hill for my interview for the House Science Committee, David said, “Well, do you have any political or policy experience?” And I said I had had a National Science Foundation Grant to develop a biotech institute, and it required me to

**A representative
for U.S. Secretary
of Education
Margaret
Spellings provided
remarks on the
importance of
community
colleges.**

**The Secretary
values the work of
community
colleges deeply.**

negotiate transfer of credit degrees with three four-year schools in Maryland. David, of course, knew what this was all about, and he said, “Oh! Well, you know politics and you know policy.” So I began my career in policy as a result of both the difficulties I had encountered in creating those articulation partnerships and also the success that we had had in seeing students transition from high school to two-year to four-year schools.

Transfer of credit is at the top of Secretary Spellings’ priority list.

I think it is very appropriate that I am now at the Department of Education, where transfer of credit is at the top of Secretary Spellings’ priority list. She understands that the average student today does not start at an institution and graduate four years later. Students are in and out of higher education. They return to higher education. Some come with a credential in mind, such as a four-year degree. Some come with a two-year degree in mind. And some come just for a class or two, or a certificate. And sometimes, it is people like us in this room who want to learn a foreign language, or photography, or pottery, or history in a way that we did not before. For people who are enrolled at community colleges, it is so important to make sure that the money that they and the taxpayers spend to get started in education or to continue their education, transfer on to the next step in their pathway, is spent well.

Again, when we talk about transfer of credit, it is not just community colleges. We also see difficulties transferring from one four-year school to another, and among all kinds of schools. In terms of transfer of credit, we think the difficulties in navigating it not only cost the student and the taxpayer a substantial sum of money, but we also think it is a barrier that may be resulting in lower success rates than we would like to see. So transfer of credit is at the top of the Secretary’s priority list.

Difficulties in navigating the transfer process may be resulting in lower student success rates.

I am really delighted that you invited me here today. I am looking forward to hearing what you have to say, and we are working hard within the Department to create new programs and new opportunities that facilitate and foster even further growth in the world of articulation partnership and transfer of credit.

Dr. Margarita Benitez
Senior Associate
National Articulation and Transfer Network

Dr. Benitez described the goal and programs of the National Articulation and Transfer Network. These include the organization’s efforts to help institutions better align their course requirements, provide students and

advisors with more information about transfer guidelines, and improve the transition from two- to four-year institutions.

Testimony. Allow me to begin by congratulating this Committee for highlighting the often neglected issue of transfer. I have spent the past ten years working in ambitious national access and success projects: with the U.S. Department of Education, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, Excelencia in Education, the National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN), which I am representing here today, and, most recently, with the Education Trust, and the National Association of System Heads.

In my experience, transfer hardly ever appears in the initial agenda. But once one really delves into the barriers to access and success in higher education, transfer-related issues always surface. Enabling effective transfer is of special interest for advocates of the underrepresented in higher education because so many low-income students, among them significant numbers of students of color, begin and often do not complete their higher education at community colleges.

Only about a third of community college students who enter college expecting to earn a baccalaureate degree actually transfer to a baccalaureate institution within three years of entering college. Even so, transfer students make up 44 percent of students in public colleges and two-year institutions. There is a lot of transfer going on. Sixty percent of undergraduates attend more than one institution. But much of it is not leading to a credential.

A lot of hard work is going unacknowledged. Institutions, as well as students, are not getting credit for many worthy efforts. Students spend time and money on courses that do not count when they transfer. According to some calculations, this adds up to close to a billion dollars a year across the country. As far as institutions, our current ways of counting students (especially the first-time, full-time criteria) specifically exclude transfer students, even those who attain the baccalaureate degree. The transfer may go well, and the student may get a baccalaureate degree, but if that student received an associate's degree in three years, his or her attainment does not count for any institution that student attended. It is not counted in the graduation rate of the baccalaureate-granting institution, or anywhere in IPEDS. It is not included on college resources online. It is not acknowledged by the state legislature or the state offices of higher education that apportion state funding. It is not considered in any of the national rankings that many institutions live by. When students are not counted, they do not count. They do not count at the time of priority setting, and, therefore, they do not count at the time of resource allocation.

Only about one-third of community college students who expect to earn a bachelor's degree transfer to a four-year college within three years.

There is a misalignment in higher education among many federal, state, and institutional policies.

At present, there is a misalignment in higher education among many federal, state, and institutional policies, and among the changed demographics of the student population. Many of the existing policies were designed for the needs of the traditional college student, who is aged 18 to 24, and a full-time, first-time enrollment, often at a residential baccalaureate institution. Such a student is no longer in the majority on many college campuses today.

Transfer students are practically invisible in higher education, with little thought given to the needs they bring and the services they require.

With the exception of community colleges, transfer students are practically invisible in higher education, with little thought given to the needs they bring and the services they require. As Clifford Adelman and others have pointed out, many of the orientation services provided to first-year students would be helpful to transfer students who are also newcomers to the receiving institution. I was glad to see Cliff's name among your speakers. We all know his contributions to the serious discussion of the toughest issues facing higher education. I want to underscore that he has developed concrete suggestions for an amendment to federal legislation that would allow a more accurate and comprehensive count of students under progress, and a more precise portrait of institutional effectiveness. Cliff will be able to explain his proposal far better than I can, but I want to endorse it wholeheartedly and to quote a key passage of the proposed amendment: "A student shall be counted as a completion or graduation if the student has received an undergraduate credential offered by the institution. A student should also be counted as a completion if the student has transferred to any program or eligible institution for which the prior program provides appropriate preparation." I ask you to consider whether this is not eminently reasonable.

NATN is a coalition of colleges and universities committed to the academic success of transfer students.

Right now, we are overlooking the struggles and achievements of many students and of many institutions on the front line of access to higher education. Low-income students and students of color, Latinos in particular, often attempt college on a part-time basis because they cannot afford another option. They are the least visible and the most at-risk in the undergraduate universe. Sadly, those most in need often receive less in financial aid than more prosperous students. For education to make a difference in the lives of the poor and the underrepresented, our commitment to access must be coupled with an equally strong commitment to the success of students who have faced more hardship before entering college than most of us will know in our lifetimes. Not counting part-time and transfer students in the metrics that matter means we do not take into account the educational needs and realities of numerous sectors of our population, especially the poor and non-white, who are the emerging majority among the young, when apportioning support and recognition to students and to institutions of higher education.

NATN is a growing coalition of colleges and universities committed to the academic success of transfer students, particularly students of color. It is managed by the Institute for Higher Education Policy, on behalf of the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. The Alliance brings together the major associations that represent minority-serving institutions in the United States in order to pursue a common agenda on behalf of students of color and the institutions that serve them. The associations are NAFEO (historically black and permanently black institutions), AIHEC (tribal colleges and universities) and HACU (Hispanic-serving institutions).

Perhaps NATN's main contribution to the emerging national conversation on transfer is its public website, www.NATN.org, which contains up-to-date information on most articulation and transfer issues in a formal design useful to multiple audiences, among them researchers, policymakers, college and university administrators, counselors, and students. NATN.org provides links to all the state websites, legislation, and regulations on articulation and transfer, as well as to numerous studies, research reports, and articles on transfer topics. It also hosts the NATN student portal, an educational online tool designed especially for counselors and students who are considering transfer, with current information on every institution of higher education in the country and its transfer, financial aid, and admissions requirements. A partnership with Peterson's, the college guide provider, maintains up-to-date information. In addition, NATN's members-only web center offers opportunities for networking, professional development, and policy updates.

NATN originated in California, under the leadership of Dr. Philip Day, president of the City College of San Francisco. Its charter members include both stand-alone institutions and community college systems in California, Texas, Washington State, Arizona, Michigan, New York, and Maryland. And its current membership extends to most minority-serving institutions in the country. NATN also maintains cordial relations with regional associations of transfer officials, such as New England Transfer Association, as well as the California and the New York state associations. These wide-ranging relations, coupled with the Washington DC base of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, enable NATN to hear from practitioners about emerging trends, challenges, and promising practices across the nation, as well as let our members know about policy developments and proposed federal legislation.

Since 2006, NATN charter members have held their annual meeting at the summer academy sponsored by the Institute. This is a team-based strategic planning retreat for institutions seeking to transform the access and success rates of their students of color through the judicious use of institutional data. Its participation in the academy has enabled NATN members to develop and enhance connections with minority-serving

NATN's website, contains up-to-date information on most articulation and transfer issues.

The NATN online student portal contains information on transfer requirements for every institution of higher education in the country.

institutions, as well as provide a national forum to showcase practices that have worked in the region, and to discover the commonalities and differences in the practices of institutions in other parts of the country. As the commission knows, the fifty states make up quite a varied mosaic, not to say a crazy quilt, of rules and regulations on the topic of transfer. And although most transfer occurs with institutions that are physically close to each other, about 40 percent of transfer displacements cross state lines. So if we truly want to serve our students well, we must pay attention to what goes on beyond our neighborhood.

NATN institutions have created effective transfer pathways through collaborative and clearly charted interventions.

I have learned from NATN institutions that have created effective transfer pathways for their students through deliberate, collaborative, clearly charted and repeated interventions. My colleagues in the Alamo Community College District in San Antonio, in the Houston Community College System, in the Northern California Working Group, in the Maricopa Community College System in Arizona, and in Baltimore County, Maryland, have worked hard to establish articulation and transfer network councils that include practically all the community colleges and baccalaureate-granting institutions, both public and private, in their respective regions. The councils are made up of transfer coordinators and a number of higher ranking officials that meet regularly, engage jointly in professional development activities, exchange information, hold fairs and orientation sessions, and gather and share data about their students' profiles, academic performance and progress, as well as about scholarship and internship opportunities. Their apparently modest, but quite labor-intensive accomplishments clear the path for effective transfer and include establishing a listserv to improve communication, identifying points of contact at all participating schools, developing training modules for community colleges and university staff, and developing and reviewing regularly transfer plans and guides for all university majors. In some cases, like ARTSYS in Maryland, or Cal-PASS in California, this information is maintained electronically, which is very useful, but it must be updated regularly in order to remain current.

Some states such as Texas and Florida mandate common course numbering by law to reduce barriers to student transfer.

Our California members have paid particular attention to curricular alignment issues. They also work hard to develop and keep current transfer and articulation websites that contain statewide information, as well as projects that bring community college and university faculty together by region, by discipline, or by other groupings to discuss transfer and articulation issues.

Frankly, articulation agreements entail a lot of work. Some states such as Texas and Florida mandate common course numbering by law, and mandate the transferability of certain curriculum blocks, such as general education courses. Even so, our NATN colleagues in San Antonio and

Houston are constantly on the go to bring life to the letter of the law and make successful transfer a reality.

What these sustained and regular interactions make possible is a spirit of trust and shared mission among participating institutions. This spirit enables them to see students as our students and value their success no matter where they are taking courses at a particular point in time. This trust is what makes possible some of the most promising developments in transfer.

Joint admissions and reverse transfer agreements are being tried out in Maryland and Texas. Joint admission, as its name implies, means that a student is accepted at the same time at a community college and a baccalaureate degree-granting institution. Once she or he completes the necessary requirements through a clearly spelled-out course of study, the student continues without a hitch to the baccalaureate degree-granting institution.

Joint admissions and reverse transfer agreements are being tried out in Maryland and Texas.

Reverse transfer acknowledges the non-linear nature of many students' progress through higher education. An analysis of the National Educational Longitudinal Study's data conducted by the U.S. Department of Education indicates that ten percent of students who enter higher education have earned 60 credits, but no degree, eight-and-a-half years after graduating from high school. Most of these students qualify for an associate's degree, and many of the barriers to their degree attainment are bureaucratic and not academic (such barriers as outstanding fees, parking or library fines, or not filling out a particular institutional form).

Based on this information, on the advice of Cliff Adelman, and of the experience of some of our member institutions, NATN has developed a project called *Win-Win*. *Win-Win* institutions review student records over three years to determine which students have earned 60 credits or more and why they did not get their degrees. The project documents how many have outstanding fees, how many are missing coursework, and how many transfer elsewhere, among other things. The institution identifies low-cost or cost-free options, such as tuition waivers and online courses that would enable students to attain their degree in a very short time at low or no cost. The institution would also waive outstanding fees or cover them through external funding, thereby eliminating a significant barrier to student success. Community colleges would then award associate's degrees as appropriate.

NATN has a project called *Win-Win* to determine why students with 60 credits or more did not get their degrees.

Win-Win inverts traditional student support models, relying on assertive outreach that includes seeking out students to provide recognition or endorsement for their efforts and acknowledging students who have already proven they are college material. In this way, *Win-Win*

institutions are developing flexible and sustainable models to meet the changing needs of students over time.

A distinctive feature of *Win-Win* is that it prompts institutions to deal with barriers of their own making to student success. As they focus on students who fall through the cracks due to bureaucratic barriers, *Win-Win* institutions can identify persistent roadblocks limiting student persistence and restructure themselves to provide solutions.

I would like to end on a hopeful note. Last October, 19 state university systems (joined since by the University of North Carolina), which together serve over 2 million students, launched the Access to Success initiative, which pledges to cut in half, by 2015, the current gaps at the time of college entry and college graduation that separate low-income and minority students from other students. The idea is to achieve a state university population that looks more like the state population and more like graduating high school classes. I am happy to say that one of four topics the state university systems have chosen to work on is the topic of transfer. This is a long overdue recognition of its importance to the success of the students we care about the most. Thank you very much.

Nineteen state university systems are part of an initiative to reduce educational gaps that separate low-income and minority students from other students.

Ms. Shonda Gray
Director
Transfer Center *Connect Program*
Morgan State University

Ms. Gray discussed the *Connect Program*, an alternative for students who are initially ineligible for admission to Morgan State University (MSU) and who enroll in a neighboring community college to prepare for MSU. Although students who participate in the program begin their education at a community college, MSU provides them with access to MSU services and events, helps them prepare to transfer to MSU, and then provides support following successful transfer.

The *Connect Program* serves students who are ineligible for admission to MSU and who enroll in a community college to prepare for MSU.

Testimony. I come to you today from Morgan State University, and I am going to talk to you about one of the programs that my office runs, the *Connect Program*. Our program is an alternative route to the university for those students who are not directly admissible to Morgan, either through direct admission or through the summer program that we offer to students, our pre-college program, as outlined in various articulation agreements.

We have nine partner community colleges in Maryland, including the following: Prince George's, Montgomery, Hartford, Howard, Baltimore

City, Baltimore County, and the College of Southern Maryland. Needless to say, we are statewide. And what we do is philosophy- and mission-based. Our philosophy is that a GPA and standardized test scores do not always give us an accurate or complete picture of a student's academic potential. And so, to that end, we want to make sure that we give them every opportunity to be successful and to eventually transfer to Morgan. The mission of the program is to provide academic and other support services to aid in a successful transfer of each and every student in the program. Our goals are to provide access, student development, student monitoring, evaluation, and, ultimately, a successful transfer.

In terms of information, we address this barrier through a number of different means. Admission to the *Connect Program* is very simple. If a student has not been admitted to the university, they receive a brochure for the *Connect Program* with their rejection letter outlining the program, its goals, its missions, and its relationship to the community colleges, as well as a registration form. The student sends that back to us with a minimal fee of \$50. We are tinkering with raising that to \$100 because that fee covers the cost of their student activities and their student ID card. When student activity fees run from \$800 on the low end to \$1,500 on the high end at some institutions, \$50 to \$100 for student activity fees is minimal.

After the student has been admitted to the program in the summertime, we have a day-long orientation at Morgan University for all of our *Connect* liaisons (we have a liaison at every community college) and *Connect* students. The students are able to meet with their liaisons and hear from individuals at Morgan who are *a propos* to the *Connect Program*. So they hear from the honors program. They hear from the Director of Student Activities at Morgan. They also, of course, have direct access to their *Connect* liaisons on their college campuses. And they receive ongoing communication from my office in the form of newsletters every semester. Our newsletters highlight Morgan deadlines that they need to be mindful of, in terms of admission. They highlight community college deadlines in terms of finals, midterms, and registration for the next semester, including applications for financial aid for the coming year. They also receive emails and phone calls from us as necessary.

Our program requirements address the Committee's academic, as well as informational barrier categories. We require that all students submit to us their course schedule for the semester. At the end of the semester, they have to submit to us their semester grades. And we keep track of the students' progress throughout the program so that we can advise them on what they should be doing in the following semester, and when they are going to be ready for transfer. Typically, students must earn 24 transferable credits with a GPA of a 2.0 to be eligible to transfer to Morgan.

The mission of the program is to provide academic and other support services to aid in a successful transfer of each and every student in the program.

The program keeps track of the students' progress and advises them on how to prepare for transfer.

The first page of the articulation agreement is primarily for the advisor and shows the course-to-course articulation. For example, the top box shows the 24 credits suggested for Hartford Community College and what that equals at Morgan State University. Also included are any specific notes for the advisor and course alternatives for the student. We try to keep this very generic. Once a student starts getting into those major courses and wants to take business or science courses, then it becomes a bit more tricky, so we try to keep it more general for the first 24 credit hours.

Students receive an MSU ID card and participate in MSU social, co-curricular, and student services.

The second page of the articulation agreement is an academic advising sheet that the student receives telling him or her what class needs to be taken at the community college, and what grade needs to be received in order to transfer that class to Morgan. They can keep track of when they took the class and the grade that they received, so they know they are on track to transfer to Morgan. And again, the alternatives are at the bottom, as well as the semester deadlines. One other nice note: because these students have previously applied to Morgan, when they reapply to Morgan after completing the *Connect Program*, their application fee to Morgan is waived.

Access to Morgan is the part of the program that keeps the student very vested in the program and the university. Students receive a MSU student ID card that identifies them as a *Connect* student. And they are allowed to participate in all student services that we offer to a regular Morgan student. So they can come to the library. They can participate in athletic events. The only caveat is that they cannot play on an athletic team because of NCAA rules and guidelines. But they can attend games. They can attend social events, and they get the same student discounts to our campus homecoming, concerts, and plays. They can go to counseling. We have students that play in the band, and they coordinate their schedules with our band director. We have students that sing in the choir. They participate in co-curricular activities. They feel like they are a part of the university. And part of what we send in our newsletters is the list of student activities for that semester, with links to the website so that they can track any changes to activities.

The *Connect Program* staff is developing baselines and other methods to refine the program.

My office has only had this program for two years, so we are still developing baselines and other things, and are looking at ways to refine the program. We are also looking at the possibility of having the students live on campus (piloting that with Baltimore City Community College) and seeing what that does to increase their propensity to transfer. Those things address the Advisory Committee's social activities barrier.

The transfer process, which addresses the Advisory Committee's complexity barrier, is very simple for my students. One, they do not pay

the application fee. Two, the application process itself is streamlined: they can apply online or submit the hardcopy application. But any hardcopy documents are sent directly to my office, and I make copies of everything that comes in, whether it is electronic or hardcopy. I keep a file in my office with their original *Connect* file and take everything to the admissions office myself for the actual processing. We make sure that everything is where it is supposed to be, so that by the time it gets to the admissions office, the application is pretty much academic. We know they will be admitted because we made sure that they had the requirements. It is as much as completing the paperwork for the admission process.

Connect students attend a day-long transfer orientation session, something all transfer students have to do. There are four in the summer and one in the spring. And at that point, they hear from all of the necessary departments: financial aid, the honors program, and student activities again. We bring student government, housing, and all of those access points they might not normally be able to find.

In terms of dealing with financial barriers, Morgan offers some very lucrative transfer scholarships. The scholarship requirements for students transferring from Maryland community colleges are somewhat different than for those students transferring from state schools. We have a Bridge Grant for those students transferring with at least 24 credits. While students can transfer with less than 24 credits, we try to encourage them to meet that 24 credit mark so they can at least qualify for our lower end financial assistance, which is the Bridge Grant of \$1,000 a semester.

We have tuition scholarships for which a student must earn a 3.0 GPA with 56 credits or an associate's degree. The tuition scholarship will cover the semester's tuition and fees for the year. If a student has a 3.5 GPA with 56 credits or an associate's degree, he or she receives a full scholarship, including tuition, fees, room and meals, and \$750 towards books.

One of the barriers that we face is the stigma of community college. That is very prevalent in the student of color community, both African-American and Hispanic. They have this idea that a community college is sub-par; they do not want to be there. They want to get to the four-year institution. But we do have some success in convincing the students that it is to their benefit to stay at the community college. And to that end, we have these scholarships available for them. And so, again, while they can transfer prior to the accumulation of 24 credit hours, we try to encourage them to stay in the *Connect Program* through to the completion of the associate's degree.

***Connect* students receive assistance with the MSU admissions process and attend a day-long transfer orientation session.**

Students transferring with at least 24 credits receive a Bridge Grant of \$1,000 per semester.

If we do convince the student to stay through completion of the associate's degree, then the academic advising sheets that we discussed earlier are amended. We work with them to see what they are interested in, in terms of a major, and give them academic advising sheets based on their major. This is to ensure that once they get to Morgan they spend only two years at Morgan.

The program has started to gain in popularity. Our *Connect* liaisons have called us to say that there are students that have never applied to Morgan, but are thinking about Morgan because they have heard about the *Connect Program* and are interested in it. We tell the *Connect* advisors that when they have that type of situation, the student should fill out an application and send in their \$50 fee. So we think this program is making some strides and making some gains.

The program has only been with my office for two years. We were using baseline data from the 2006-07 cohort when I first took over the program, and we should start to have data coming in this fall about transfer rates and student success. But so far, so good. And for more information, feel free to give my office a call. Thank you.

Students who have never applied to Morgan State consider it because of the reputation the *Connect Program* is gaining.

Dr. James Applegate
Vice President of Academic Affairs
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Dr. Applegate discussed several strategies that Kentucky has developed to boost transfer rates between two- and four-year institutions as part of the state's goal to double the number of bachelor's degree recipients. These include a commitment on the part of the state toward transfer as well as financial incentives to institutions.

Testimony. I want to talk to you a bit about how we have come to care about transfers in Kentucky. I agree with Margarita Benitez: if you do not count people, they do not count, or we treasure what we measure. I will then talk about financial aid, student support, and curricular alignment.

We did an analysis of Kentucky to determine what it would take for us to be above the national average in educational attainment. A study done by the Milliken Institute in 2002 shows a very tight line correlating per capita income in states to the percentage of the population with a baccalaureate degree. Kentucky is at the wrong end of that line, and we need to move forward faster. We also know from a study done by our own Long Term Policy Research Center that if we were above that national average, it would mean an additional nine to ten billion dollars in

Kentucky has developed strategies to boost transfer rates as part of the state's goal to double the number of bachelor's degree recipients.

wealth flowing around the state and billions more in tax revenue. So we looked at how many college baccalaureate degree holders we had in 2000 in the state, and we developed a projection model (this is all on our website: <http://cpe.ky.gov/>) showing where we would be at current growth rates and what we needed to change by 2020 to get to or above the national average for number of college graduates living and working in the state. Basically, we found we needed to double the number of college graduates to be where we wanted to be.

When we looked at our current production levels, even with the rapid increase in degree production we have seen over the last four to six years since we restructured the system, we found we were going to be 211,000 short of the number we needed to double the numbers by 2020. So where are these additional 211,000 baccalaureate-degree holders going to come from? To get another 211,000 degrees, we looked at what we had to do to reduce high school drop-out rates and improve college-going, retention, and graduation rates at the universities, including importing college graduates with good jobs. But the thing I want to focus on is that middle piece, enrolling more first-time students through KCTCS (Kentucky Community and Technical College System) and transferring them to four-year colleges. This strategy will, hopefully, generate 26,000 additional baccalaureate degrees.

One of the things we have done is a transfer scholarship pilot with a budget of about \$300,000. The pilot is like some state covenant programs for 8th graders and middle-schoolers. If a student agrees to be focused on transfer and meet certain benchmarks, we intend to give them scholarships their first or second year, and then a scholarship the third year. Many of our four-year institutions are developing their own scholarship programs to supplement this program and carry the student to graduation. We hope that those students whom we reward will be first in line for the institutional scholarship programs.

The “double the numbers” plan has set aggressive goals for baccalaureate degree production for the universities. If we get the money we have asked for from the state, the universities will get about \$5,000 per head for every additional graduate they produce the first year of this biennium, and \$15,000 per head the second year of the biennium. And if the student happens to be an underprepared, minority, STEM, or a transfer student, the institution gets bonuses. You can almost double your reward for a graduate if you can get a STEM, underprepared, transfer, minority student to graduate. The community colleges get those same rewards for transfers and associate’s degree production.

Kentucky is not a fast-growing, youthful state. And in many areas of our state, the high school population is actually declining. It did not take

If a student agrees to focus on transfer and meet certain benchmarks, scholarships are given in the first or second year, as well as the third year.

Higher education leaders quickly realized that they could not meet their degree production goals without transfer students.

university presidents and others long to figure out that they could not meet their degree production goals and get that money without transfer students. As a result, we have seen transfer scholarship programs and all sorts of things to promote transfer being developed at universities. I am not saying it is all mercenary. I think universities want to do the right thing, but it does not hurt when doing the right thing also pays. So that is the scholarship program. We also have loan forgiveness programs in high-demand fields.

Several Kentucky universities offer community college students the ability to attend the university at community college rates.

We are also proposing to the legislature this session that we freeze tuition at the community colleges for the next three years. That is going to require the state to step up and hold them harmless with state funds, but we want to keep them affordable. Several of our universities have offered community college students the ability to come to the university at community college rates, which is good. So if you come from the community college system, you can go to the University of Kentucky (UK), and for the first two years you are there, you will pay community college tuition rates, not UK rates. We are looking at a lot of these things in the affordability area.

It has been said before that, at the federal, state, and institutional levels, our systems are all out of whack for the groups we are discussing here. If you look at recent data released by Education Trust and others, you will see that state and institutional aid programs have gone in a direction over the last ten years that I think can only be described as immoral. They have moved aggressively, under the rubric of merit, toward situations where students who can afford to go anyway are paid lots of money, so we can brag that the SAT and ACT scores of our entering classes are higher than they were in previous years. The result is that there is a huge unmet need out there, and it is certainly affecting the population we are talking about today. The Advisory Committee needs to look, not only at the federal level, but at the state and institutional levels to incentivize states and institutions to realign their aid programs to address the needs of this population.

A task force of legislators, university presidents, and others was created to redesign developmental education programs.

We are addressing the complexity barrier through things such as student support services. Developmental education was mentioned as an issue under complexity in your materials. Recently, we created a major task force of legislators, university presidents, and others to redesign our developmental education programs. We have set statewide cutoff scores for college readiness. We are doing a lot with K-12 to reduce the number of underprepared students. However, the key piece of this is that community colleges do 70 percent of the development education in our state. And I do not think that is atypical. So redesigning developmental education is a key piece of helping community college students succeed and transfer.

We found that we spend \$34 million a year on developmental education in our small state. You can imagine what California or Texas or New York spend, and, still, in our state those students drop out at twice the rate of prepared students. So, somehow, the money is not being spent as wisely as it should. So we are redesigning our developmental education program, which is key because if the students do not have effective developmental education, and are not allowed to move into credit-bearing work quickly, they are not going to transfer.

And there are a number of other things we are working on, including adult-learner focused campuses. We just received a grant to examine course offerings and academic policies and see how well they are aligning with best practices for adult learners. We are looking at that because we know our universities and community colleges need to be better ready for the many adult learners we are trying to attract back to college, and must attract back, if we are going to meet our double the numbers goals given our limited youth population.

In terms of curricular alignment, we have developed statewide “2 + 2”s in business and education. These, as in most states, are our most popular areas of transfer. For example, all of the business deans at all of the universities have agreed that if a student completes a particular associate’s degree in business at a community college anywhere in the state, all of that work transfers into any business major: marketing, accounting, management, etc. The same is happening in education.

We have a completer degree program. We required all the institutions to put one in place. All have but one so far. If you complete any associate’s degree, whether it is in heating, venting, and air conditioning, or in history, you can complete a baccalaureate degree in just about the same amount of time as a native four-year student through a completer degree. These are intended to be inverted baccalaureates. Sometimes, you finish that heating, venting, and air conditioning associate’s degree, and then you take the completer degree at, for example, Northern Kentucky University, in management or communications, you graduate, and you manage an HVAC business or start your own business. These degrees are not for most students (if you want to be a nurse or a teacher) but they are one more avenue to help some students, especially those with non-transfer associate degrees, to obtain a baccalaureate degree that adds value.

The big thing that we are working on in the curricular alignment area is a focus on competency-based transfer models. I am so tired of course-to-course articulation agreements. I have done it for decades. And we will be doing it for decades, because that darn curriculum just keeps changing. It is not Math 108 anymore; it is Math 108.426, and we have to go back

A completer degree program allows students with applied associate’s degrees to complete a baccalaureate degree in a timeframe similar to that of a native four-year student.

Competency-based transfer models in the area of curricular alignment are under development.

and figure out whether 108.426 transfers in the same way as 108. We have made some progress in developing a competency-based model. Our faculty are able to agree on the competencies they want people to have after general education. The rub is in assessment, and the validity of assessments and cut-off scores. But we hope to develop an alternative track for transfer through which a student could demonstrate life-long learning as well as other ways in which they might have the competency they would need to succeed in the university's upper division. I do not care if they learned it in a dark closet hanging upside down for four years. If they have the required skills/knowledge, and we can assess and validate that they have it, what do we care what courses they took or did not take?

If the system is not held accountable and success is not rewarded, special initiatives will fail to launch.

One of the most important things to keep in mind in all of this work is that, if you do not hold your system accountable, and you do not reward success, then you are not going to get anywhere regardless of how many special initiatives you launch. So we have in Kentucky, from the outset, put key transfer indicators in our state accountability system. Again, that accountability system is on our website. It is organized around five basic questions that define our public agenda for postsecondary education. That accountability system has helped us make progress. We are up 20 percent in transfers since 2002-03. We set a record this year for more transfers than at any other time in the history of the state of Kentucky. But to get to those numbers in 2020 I mentioned earlier, I need a ten percent increase in transfer every year from this point forward. That cannot be business as usual. That has got to be a radically different approach to transfer.

It occurred to me after about three years of blood, sweat, and tears on credit transfer that we did not really know why students transferred or did not transfer. If we did not figure that out, we were not going to ramp up transfer as we needed to. We worked with the community college system, and we did a semi-random online survey across institutions and programs of 5,000 community college students. We did focus groups with all the people who worked with transfer in the community colleges and universities. In our study, the top three things we were told that kept students from transferring were as follows: financial aid, lack of advising and information, and failure to see a reason to transfer. Lack of credit transfer did not make the top three. I want to highlight the third item: a lot of our community college students did not see a reason to transfer. They did not see the value added from a baccalaureate degree because the local jobs available to them did not seem to require a baccalaureate degree. So we are incorporating what we are calling a transfer component into our Go Higher Kentucky campaign. We have got to make the case for transfer to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution to students the same way we are making the case to high school students about college.

Kentucky's study found that the top three things that prevented students from transferring were financial aid, lack of advising and information, and failure to see a reason to transfer.

You have in your packet something called a Transfer Feedback Report. We have been doing a high school feedback report forever, but have just started this. The hardest thing about doing it was getting approvals from the FERPA folks in the U.S. Department of Education and from our institutions to get final grades for the students, which the analysis requires. What this report tells us about every community college in Kentucky is data such as: how many students transferred, to what institution did they transfer, how many hours did they have when they transferred, how many of those hours transferred, how well did they do at the university, and when did they get a degree, as well as a demographics break-out on all this by ethnicity, and full- and part-time status, etc. As it turns out, 77 percent of our transfer students transfer full-time. It also turns out that if students complete that associate's degree before transfer, students get baccalaureate degrees at a higher rate.

Seventy-seven percent of Kentucky transfers become full-time students.

Someone said, "Know your data. It helps you if you know what's going on." What data enables us to do is to look at where strategies are working and where they are not. We have one community college in our state that is the primary transfer community college for four different universities. Now, if nothing else, that makes me want to visit that campus. And I have. I can tell you what they are doing and why they are so successful. At other campuses, it is hard to find anyone transferring.

The other thing that data allows us to do is look at how transfer students are doing at our universities. If, at one university, transfer students seem to be sinking at higher rates, and, at another university, they are succeeding at higher rates, we know they are coming from the same system, and we can begin to ask questions of universities about what they are doing and not doing to promote transfer student success.

Data is not a hammer. It is a continual improvement device, but, nevertheless, there has to be accountability. And at some point, people who do well need to be rewarded. We need to figure out a system in which we count these community college/transfer students, and be sure that it counts for the institutions as well, both community colleges and universities, if they do well by these students. Thank you.

New Jersey's new transfer legislation requires public four-year institutions to accept all coursework from an in-state transfer student with an associate's degree.

Ms. Jane Oates
Executive Director
New Jersey Commission on Higher Education

Ms. Oates discussed New Jersey's new statewide transfer legislation (A3968/S2535), which requires public four-year colleges and universities within the state to accept all coursework from a student seeking to transfer

with an associate's degree from a New Jersey county, or community, college. She also described the state's plan to track student transfer rates.

Testimony. For those of you who do not know, I spent a decade on Capitol Hill, like Diane Auer Jones and several other people here. I was offered a position in New Jersey as the State Director, but it is nice to be back among friends.

New Jersey has one of the most decentralized state higher education structures.

You are going to hear many of the same messages that my predecessors have put forward, and I think that is a good sign. Because whether you are in Kentucky or New Jersey, the problems are the same. New Jersey has one of the most decentralized state higher education structures. The Commission is the licensing authority, but our institutions probably have the greatest degree of autonomy of any institution in the nation. New Jersey institutions have done an excellent job since 1986 and 1994, when full autonomy was implemented, and they have done a quality job educating folks.

Where the rub has come is that any mention of using a systems approach in New Jersey brings back the boogeyman of the chancellor. There is such resistance that the one great thing about Governor Corzine bringing me in is, if there were ever a person not meant to be a chancellor, you are listening to her. So I think it has reduced some fears such that college presidents can roll up their sleeves and work.

Three public research institutions enroll almost 3,500 transfer students.

First, let me give you a snapshot of New Jersey, because when I first took the job, people asked me, "Are there colleges in New Jersey besides Princeton?" Yes. We have three public research institutions that enroll about 63,000 undergraduates, and 93 percent of them are from New Jersey. They enroll almost 3,500 transfer students. So transfer is big business. And I want to state clearly that you will see this similarity for all of my sectors. Of the transfer students, 62 percent transferred from New Jersey State Colleges. We are an inbred system. And I inserted a codicil in our transfer legislation that UMDNJ, our medical school, only has a small number of undergraduates and does not accept a lot of transfers because of their mission. Eight of our senior public institutions enroll 77,000 undergraduates, and 96 percent of them are in-state students. Among the eight, there are almost 7,000 transfer students, and 60 percent of them are from New Jersey County Colleges. We have nine senior public institutions, but I did not include Thomas Edison, which is unique in that it works with adults who have attended colleges in the past and want to put their credits together toward a baccalaureate degree through a mixture of tests and online education. I have not included them because they would greatly skew my numbers.

Among independent colleges with a public mission, the 14 of them enroll about 45,000 students. Of that number, 75 percent are New Jersey students. Even Princeton, which has the lowest number of in-state students, still has 16 percent from New Jersey, which is amazing. Independent colleges enroll about 3,000 transfers, over a third of them from the New Jersey County Colleges. A total of 12 independent institutions are excluded from this data and from our legislation because they are religious in nature.

Among the 19 county colleges, there is a huge enrollment. Of that population, 30 percent graduate or transfer to a four-year college, and 12 percent earn an associate's degree. That number is a number we would like to increase. We realize it is one of the few areas of higher education in which New Jersey is significantly below the national average. Not for long. We intend to improve that dramatically.

So how did New Jersey get to the point where it was ready for legislation? After 18 years of in-state conversation. When I arrived in March of 2006, a long-standing county college president said, "Listen girl, we have been talking about this for 18 years. Are you staying 18 years?" I promptly said, "No. We have to do it faster than that." You saw that there are large numbers of in-state transfer students. You can imagine that every state legislator had gotten a complaint. And that led to this unbelievable pile of anecdotes about football players and normal students taking courses together at the same community college, anecdotes in which the football player got a D, and the other kid got an A, but could not transfer the course, yet the football player transferred his. I have yet to find the football player or the other student. They are somewhere in the Pine Barrens with the Jersey devil.

About a week after I got there, we closed shop for four weeks and did a transcript study. I will tell you that anyone who is trying to move toward legislation without arming themselves with facts is destined for disaster, because legislation by anecdote is worse than legislation, period.

What we found will not surprise you. There were almost no students among those whose 500 transcripts we studied who transferred every credit. We found every oddity imaginable. For instance, about half of the county colleges require physical education credit for an associate's degree. Only two senior publics accept physical education as a transfer of credit. Some senior publics would not give any college credit for a language that had already been studied in high school. So we found things that we have been able to fix along the way to the legislation.

The good news is that over 18 years, existing faculty groups had started to talk to each other. In any state, this faculty-to-faculty conversation is

Within the population of the 19 county colleges, 30 percent graduate or transfer to a four-year college.

A transcript study of 500 students found that almost no community college students were able to transfer every credit to the four-year institution.

The legislation is mandatory only for public colleges.

critical because there is real faculty elitism. There is a great belief among faculty that the only reason someone is teaching at a two-year college is because that person cannot join a four-year faculty—untrue, but strongly held. I have just redone the regulations to mandate that 40 percent of faculty must be full-time, which was a huge improvement, and I would argue that many states are dealing with similar things. In order to deal with years of underfunding by states who are facing budget crises, all of New Jersey's public colleges had begun to rely more and more on adjuncts. Adjuncts cannot do curriculum reform. Adjuncts can do minimal student advisement. But adjuncts cannot participate in this important dialogue about transfer of credit. Yet the myth is maintained that one school's courses are not the same as those at another school, even though at many four-year colleges, the entry-level courses are taught by the same adjuncts who teach at the neighboring county college. But it is critical that in whatever conversation we are having about quality in higher education, we try to let states figure it out. However, we need to figure out what is the right number of faculty to ensure quality and quality discussions.

The other thing is fairness. Everybody talks about fairness, and it is important to define fairness when you begin your discussions. It is fair that a student not pay twice to repeat the same course they have successfully completed elsewhere. It is equally fair if a student only receives credit for that course and is admitted to more senior level courses if they are qualified. We are selling kids a bill of goods if we accept them for upper division courses when they have not been adequately prepared. We are lying to them in a fashion worse than when we lie to them about equality in K-12, because we all know that there is no equality in K-12. Recognition of fairness is something that has to be restated at almost every meeting.

The legislation requires annual reporting on outcomes for transfer students.

So here we are with the legislation. Let me be clear that we decided in discussion that it is mandatory only for public colleges, and it is built on a voluntary agreement. Our private colleges have been great players in terms of transfer of credit, with the exception of Princeton, which does not accept transfer students. Also, it made the legislation cleaner to exclude religious colleges, but that is by no means an attempt to exclude them from access or enrollment opportunities.

The legislation has just been passed, and it requires annual reporting on outcomes for transfer students. New Jersey has a Unit Record Identifier System. We do IPEDS, and I will add my voice both now and at the end of my discussion, on the need for reform in IPEDS. Not only because we have all listened carefully to Clifford Adelman for a long time, but from the state's perspective, colleges look like failures when they are actually huge successes because students are transferring to four-year institutions.

In terms of the annual report required by legislation: we began collecting data on our own state system upon my arrival in 2006. We will have two baseline years before we go live with the legislation next September. In that manner, we will be able to keep colleges honest, so they do not start accepting fewer transfer students once the legislation goes into effect. We have already observed that we have a continuous improvement model since 2005-06 in terms of four- and six-year graduation rates. We will collect four- and six-year graduation rates on traditional, or native, students and on transfer students. We will report that on our website, and the public will hold the colleges accountable. And we will also do an annual report on specific implementation issues that will include public disclosure of the appeals process.

The consensus agreement is that transfer admissions will still depend on the overall strength of the student. There is no guarantee of admission. The senior public colleges will not be expected to exceed their enrollment goals to admit transfer students. But, as you see, they have been admitting them. We do not think it is a problem. As you can imagine, in this debate in every state, the community colleges care more about transfer than the senior publics do. It is not in the senior publics' best interest to repeat coursework because they are awarding the degrees, but they feel, in many instances, that they did not have enough time with the student to feel that they are graduating someone who is prepared. This was a give to them. We think it is a mild give. We are not telling them who to accept. Admissions is still their business.

All the county colleges must require written and oral communications as part of any program that they deliver for a potential transfer student. Mathematics, science and technology, social science, humanities, history, and diversity courses must be part of their general education program. And each institution is working very hard on mathematics, which is the big problem.

In terms of students transferring with a degree, our primary concern was to respect the integrity of the associate's degree. I agree with the rest of the panelists that we have to get more people earning a degree while they are at county colleges. But we have our own electronic site that transfer commissioners and students can use called the NJ transfer site. If they have a degree, they are going to transfer as a first-semester junior.

In terms of students transferring without a degree, our agreement was that 100- and 200-level courses will stay at the county colleges. Some county colleges were trying to teach 300-level courses, but that has to stop. The 300-level course has to be taught at the four-year level. If students transfer without a degree, as long as they are taking courses that would be degree-leading courses at the county college, they will get a maximum of

In terms of students transferring with a degree, a primary concern was to respect the integrity of the associate's degree.

If students transfer without a degree, but are taking degree-leading courses at a county college, students will receive a maximum of 60 to 64 credits.

60 to 64 credits. The transfer student will be notified within 30 days of their transfer status.

The annual assessment will be done by the Commission and the President's Council. The colleges will be responsible for submitting that data, and the most important part is the appeals process. The student will appeal first to the senior public institution and notify the two-year college from which they transferred, as well as the Commission. The appeals process will be done by what is being called the Transfer Committee on the President's Council, with the Commission. The final appeal will be heard by the Executive Directors of the Office of the President's Council, and the Commission.

AcademyOne is using technology to help institutions and state systems address challenges associated with the transfer process.

We still have work to do. New Jersey does not talk at all in this agreement about students who earn an AAS degree. We have a lot of work to do with those students, and we have a lot of work still to do on non-credit course alignment. I hope that next year or the year after you will invite me back and keep me honest about this data. Thank you.

Mr. David K. Moldoff
Founder and CEO
AcademyOne

Mr. Moldoff explained how AcademyOne is using technology to help institutions and state systems address the challenges associated with the transfer process between two- and four-year institutions.

Most schools have an infrastructure that is ill-prepared to deal with transfer.

Testimony. About two years ago someone asked me what I would do if I had a two-minute opportunity to speak to the President of the United States and try and solve the problem of college transfer. What would I say?

There are many issues in terms of the college transfer process and the use of technology. Obviously, from the student perspective, coordination and alignment are expected right from the get-go. Students do not expect the general mess that we find higher education is in. Whether it is a community college or a big university, each has its own IT infrastructure. As a result, all are really disconnected, and I think James Applegate mentioned that the process we have today is so disconnected that you almost have to start from scratch. And so when I was asked that question about the president, I thought, "What would I do if I started from scratch? What would I do if I had to start from a course-planning perspective and go through the processes of applying, advising, and requesting the transcript?"

Most schools, by and large, have an infrastructure that is ill-prepared to deal with transfer. The reason is that their legacy is in the traditional processing and traditional handling of students. So we are asking them to revamp systems that have taken them five to ten years to build. And it is an exhausting process. It takes the air out of most of the balloons they launch, what we call ERP systems. I worked on them for thirty years, and it is a daunting process. Some basic questions, though, arise out of the process of studying transfer across colleges as well as state systems.

We recently finished a national survey of colleges, and I asked ten basic questions. One of the questions was, “How many actually process electronic transcripts?” Electronic transcripts—simply moving records from one school to the other—follow the example of the EDI standard format or the PESC format. Less than ten percent of schools today process electronic transcripts.

The second question was, “What percentage of schools provide, on an outcome basis, a degree audit?” We are talking about a simple degree audit, a checklist of what I have to do to finish my degree, whether I am a transfer student or a traditional enrolled student. Roughly 44 percent of schools have a degree audit operation. They all have the software. A lot of them have it sitting on the shelf. They have not had the capacity to operationalize it. But only five percent of them, at the survey level we are using now, can do it on a prospective basis. That means that a student is able to look at his or her outcomes going in, which is possible at certain centralized state systems, such as Maryland and New Jersey. But many of the states do not have centralized systems. And, as a result, most students cannot look at their outcomes going in. They have to wait until after they enroll.

So it is a very tedious process to deal with this problem. The problems inherent in the mobility of student records can be broken down into three areas: the permutation of connections between institutions, or the workload involved in the flow of students among institutions; the lack of transparency across state and institutional processes; and the lack of common interfaces that would create industry standardization.

If you think about the permutations from college to college, and the 4,000 colleges and 1,200 community colleges in the United States, all flowing through the process of this BitTorrent, it could be quite overwhelming. It is taxing the system beyond belief. And it is burdening the administrative costs in the budgets of every college in the United States.

In terms of transparency, I have broken this into two columns: initiatives by state and initiatives by institution. The ones on the left of this chart are

Less than ten percent of schools today process electronic transcripts.

The problems with mobility of student records include a lack of transparency across state and institutional processes and a lack of common interfaces.

focused primarily on control and capacity, and the ones on the right are focused on implementation and sustainability. Again, there are a myriad of approaches toward handling college transfer. But the thing that really pops out at me is the one on the left, which is, again, focused on institutions. In other words, an institution develops an articulation agreement between one school and another. It is optimized to manage inputs and process. When I look at the processes on the right, they are optimized to influence outcomes. An outcome would be, for example, that the state of New Jersey is trying to develop more completed transfer students. Between them, one is decentralized and one is centralized, and that creates stress between the institutions, which reverts to governance structure and funding issues.

The data movement of student records is a very tedious process and one that causes delays.

When we look at the flow of information from lack of common interfaces, again, states have common ideas now. They are building them. Every school has its own database. Every school has its own IT infrastructure. And then we have the state unit record systems, and the IPEDS, and the National Student Clearinghouse. So the data movement of student records, because of mangled systems, is a very tedious process and one that causes delay in the process of handling transfer student information, as well as any kind of student mobility information, such as study abroad. The process of moving credentials around is predominantly manual, and the evaluation of it is manual.

So the summary of mobility breaks down into three basic problems, as I see it: the permutation problem, the lack of transparency, and the lack of connections that unify the institutional systems we have in the 21st century.

The process of moving credentials is predominantly manual, and its evaluation is manual.

So imagine traveling to Europe. I did this a couple of weeks ago by traveling to Rome. I was presenting to a group focused on the Bologna Process and data exchange. I had to have a passport. I benefited from diplomatic rules and regulations developed by my country's state department. If I did not have those, I would not have traveled there. And I have to have some way of using money and language. Those are the three things I need for mobility no matter where I go in the world. So when we think about the context of that foreign travel experience relevant to what AcademyOne is doing in education we are saying, "Look, we need to have a passport. You have to have a means to record my vitae, my credential, my ID." Then, second, we need diplomatic relations. And, third, we need a common protocol and language. So when I went to Rome, we all spoke English in our presentations, which has become the standard language for presentations in that field.

A passport is as simple as a curriculum vitae. AcademyOne's system allows me to store it because it is student-centric, not institution-centric.

Some would call it a portfolio. It stores my curriculum, stores the history of institutions I have attended, helps me secure access to my information, and helps me get advising. It also allows me to store my coursework. David Prince mentioned some of the work AcademyOne is doing in Washington State. Bellevue, for example, is a community college. I can come in, import my coursework, see it in descriptive terms, and detail my transcript. There is no transcript exchange here: the data comes into my passport. This follows what is called the PESC “send request reply,” which is a standard that we have been working for a number of years to augment and implement. From there, I want to run a planning guide with the University of Washington. That’s a service request. A service request is: “What service does Washington State provide me so that I can interrogate the major steps I can possibly take?” And it then presents to me a prospective student audit from the day that I sent it. And it is agnostic. It does not know who I am at this point. So that is what a passport could do. I could bring in my course history information. And from that course history, I can run a planning guide and perform a very personalized degree audit. But again, only five to six percent of the schools in the United States could perform that type of work.

A Curriculum Evaluation Management Center allows comparison of the curriculum at one school to that of another.

The second part, diplomatic rules and regulations, is what we call CEMC, a Curriculum Evaluation Management Center. A CEMC allows you to compare curriculum from one school to the other, whether it is done at the course, module, or program level. You could do it at all three levels. For example, in Pennsylvania they developed learning outcomes by specific discipline. A specific course would be proposed by a faculty panel to build out this process. To do this, we had to load all the courses in the United States into a database—the course catalogs of 4,000 schools, for a total of 3.5 million courses. I can tell you who teaches what course anywhere in the United States. You want to know who teaches courses on Christmas? I can tell you that because it is all in the database we developed, which we call the National Course Atlas.

All the courses in the United States have been loaded into a database—the course catalogs of 4,000 schools, for a total of 3.5 million courses.

In the process of recording decisions, you get into the analytics and the feedback loop. The idea is that you are recording a decision on a course whether or not it is equivalent, or a module whether or not it is equivalent. And if it is not equivalent, why not? What are the reasons it would not be equivalent? So the feedback loop and the analytics have been developed to allow faculty and panels to work on this together in a collaborative Internet-based approach. It is a 21st century approach, all done virtually, on the web. Participants can request opinions from other folks. They can track the work that they are doing.

The third part, the common protocols and language, is the unification approach. Now this is probably the hardest one to digest, because it is the infrastructure. This concept is what I will call DNA. If we use the

analogy of our cells—we all have cells—we took ten years to develop the DNA mapping. So, to extend the analogy, the DNA is a concept in which you expose the attributes of the cell—a cell could be one of 4,000 institutions. The transparency servers are published to the net, both secured and unsecured. They are published, in other words. A school's courses, or the ability to obtain a transcript are services that would be offered electronically. But that requires a layer on top of the IT infrastructure.

A decentralized approach should be developed: one that maps data as well as a student-centric system that establishes identity and provides services.

This layer could be what we call EdUnify, an interoperable framework that bridges IT systems. EdUnify incorporates structure, semantics, and a protocol to communicate between systems. This is what we have built and implemented in Washington State: electronic aid history and transcripts that are managed through EdUnify. But we also plan to add another layer for state and other data systems, such as IPEDS, for example. What it can do is get students enrolled. It can get course maps between two schools. It also can get data on student origination.

What I am trying to show you is an approach that is different from data aggregation in longitudinal systems. I am suggesting the development of a decentralized approach that maps, instead of aggregating, data as well as the development of a student-centric system that establishes student identity and provides services to students. In addition, the system has the ability to poll the university systems for services needed, following industry standards. And it provides the above-described benefits in the process.

So, hypothetically, what would it cost to do that? You could put the same layer on top of every infrastructure, from Notre Dame to a community college in Philadelphia, the same layer across every institution for roughly \$5,000 per institution. And what would that save? The potential savings is about \$6 billion in IT integration. Another \$3 billion could be saved if the average loss of credits not counting toward degree could be reduced, through better guidance systems, from twelve credits to six credits.

Other potential reductions that I am working on now are loan defaults that are tied to college transfer. There are very few surveys on that. Last is an increase in capacity of the higher education system as a whole, the aggregate, 375,000 full-time enrollments. Thank you very much.

Facilitating transfer from two-year to four-year institutions requires that both types of institutions work together on the issue as well as within their ranks.

Practices that Facilitate Transfer

Facilitating transfer from two-year to four-year institutions requires that both types of institutions work together on the issue as well as within their ranks in order to best serve the needs of low-income populations that

begin a postsecondary education at two-year colleges. Strategies currently used to facilitate transfer include: building partnerships, creating articulation agreements, developing support services, establishing public goals to increase transfer, and increasing financial aid for transfer students. Each of these practices addresses several key barriers that transfer students face. Programs highlighted in the symposium are a sampling of the numerous initiatives nationwide by states, institutions, and other entities that have been developed to facilitate transfer.

Build Partnerships between Two-Year and Four-Year Institutions

Numerous institutions have taken it upon themselves to build partnerships that enable students to seamlessly transfer from a two-year to a four-year college. Because the process of preparing for transfer and the transition involved is complex, students' chances of transferring and completing a baccalaureate degree are greatly enhanced when two-year and four-year institutions work together to facilitate the process and reduce barriers (NATN 2007). Such a partnership could involve alignment between two institutions, an agreement that the four-year college admit a certain number of transfer students from its partner institution, and even academic and financial support for students to make the transition.

Both Morgan State University (MSU) and Northern Virginia Community College (NoVA) have developed partnership programs to aid transfer. MSU has partnered with nine community colleges in the State of Maryland to strengthen its transfer initiative, the *Connect Program*, a joint enrollment program that provides a clear pathway for students who wish to transfer and complete a bachelor's degree at MSU. Students attend the community college at its affordable cost, but obtain access to sports and other events, services, and activities at Morgan State University. The purpose of the *Connect Program* is to allow student acclimation to and engagement in the culture and systems of the four-year college in order to support and ease transfer. Additional support services at the four-year institution ensure transfer student success. NoVA's *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program* is a partnership with George Mason University that enables transfer from the two-year to the four-year institution. NoVA provides students in the *Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program* with academic support, grants to minimize financial barriers, and sufficient guidance to eliminate confusion about the transfer process. These approaches seem to have been very effective with a low-income population.

Other transfer center programs have also committed to increasing the number of students transferring to four-year institutions. The Transfer

Many institutions have built partnerships to enable seamless transfer from a two-year to a four-year college.

The *Connect Program* is a joint enrollment program that provides a clear pathway for students who wish to transfer and complete a bachelor's degree at MSU.

Experience and Advising Mentor (TEAM) Project at the University of Illinois helps community college students transfer to the university and succeed academically. It targets ten community college districts and provides information sessions, one-on-one advising, and peer mentoring to increase the amount of information being provided to community college students about transfer (Forrest 2007). The program also offers courses that have been shown to help students determine how to move toward specific majors.

Developing a student support program to facilitate transfer involves looking at the multiple reasons for student failure to transfer and succeed.

Partnerships such as those mentioned above act globally and comprehensively to address barriers related to transfer, including all five addressed in this report. Many partnership programs have discovered that it is not enough to address any one barrier in isolation. Developing a student support program to facilitate transfer involves looking at the multiple reasons for student failure to transfer and succeed, which requires looking at student motivation and success in terms of the inequities that such students face.

Create Articulation Agreements and Services to Clarify the Transfer Process

Articulation agreements provide clear guidelines for prospective transfer students about which classes will and will not be accepted at the four-year institution. Policymakers and researchers have identified improving articulation and transfer agreements at both the state and institutional level as a key method by which to improve bachelor's degree attainment rates (Wellman 2002). Creating such agreements is no easy task as it requires faculty and institutions to agree on which courses properly prepare students and requires them to review and potentially revise their courses (Handel 2007). For large state systems, development of an articulation agreement may require a substantial investment in technology or may involve legislative review.

Improving articulation and transfer agreements at both the state and institutional level is a key way to improve bachelor's degree attainment rates.

The National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN), serves as a resource for postsecondary institutions working toward agreements. The network enables collaboration and the sharing of best practices among institutions at the national level. The NATN Student Portal (www.natn.org/studentportal) provides information on articulation agreements and transfer guidelines for community college students. NATN also monitors state progress on articulation and transfer agreements and highlights national models for other institutions to emulate. The resources that NATN provides have been helpful for a number of states and institutions in navigating this complex process.

California has a comprehensive articulation model based on a statewide general education curriculum, the Intersegmental General Education Curriculum (IGETC), that encompasses the general education requirements for any California public postsecondary institution. California has also invested in a statewide database (ASSIST), accessible to all students, that displays all course articulation agreements among the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and the California Community College systems. In addition to such databases, students considering transfer to the University of California are advised to take prerequisites for their intended major, important to establishing a transfer focus from the beginning of the community college experience. (Handel 2007).

In addition to California, numerous states, institutions, and organizations are making efforts to incorporate technology in ways that improve course credit transfer. AcademyOne, a technology company, has developed systems that can make course credit transfer and articulation models more efficient for institutions. Implementing an electronic transcript system, using a centralized degree audit operation, and developing an electronic format to move student information, such as credentials, are only some of the technological strategies developed. Appropriate use of technology may mitigate complexity for both students and institutions.

Some states, including New Jersey and Kentucky, have used legislation or other formal agreements to develop articulation strategies. New Jersey recently adopted an articulation law that requires four-year public colleges and universities within the state to accept all coursework from students with associate's degrees from New Jersey community colleges who seek to transfer to four-year institutions. The law has guaranteed a complete and seamless transfer. The state moved toward legislation to simplify the existing and numerous articulation agreements in place throughout the state, all of which created a maze of complexity for potential transfer students. Kentucky has taken a similar, but more narrow approach to articulation, implementing a "2+2" curricular alignment program. Business and education school deans have agreed that associate's degrees completed in their respective programs would be accepted by any four-year business or education program in the state.

By accepting some coursework from those with earned associate's degrees, articulation agreements, whether mandated by the state or designed by institutions themselves, may eliminate the need for students to re-take courses and, thus, reduce academic and complexity barriers. In addition, strong agreements reduce financial barriers by mitigating the costs associated with repeating courses due to non-alignment. This makes it much easier for students to enroll directly into a degree program at a

The National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN), serves as a resource for postsecondary institutions working toward agreements.

Numerous states, institutions, and organizations are making efforts to incorporate technology in ways that improve course credit transfer.

four-year college without worrying about whether all of their requirements have been fulfilled.

Develop Support Services for Transfer Students

To ensure success among students in community college and to better prepare them for transfer, research points to the effectiveness of student support services, such as in-depth orientations, proactive advising, early warning systems, organized academic support for the transfer process, and financial aid policies (Jenkins et al. 2006). Traditional outreach tactics to provide information to students, such as college fairs and mass mailings, are insufficient to enable students to retain information necessary for success. Some recommended strategies are the development of transfer centers and programs that sustain a transfer-going culture.

Data from California indicate that students are much more likely to transfer if the community college has a transfer-going culture.

The University of California, for example, has focused its outreach efforts on community college counselors and transfer-center directors (Handel 2007). All of California's community colleges have developed transfer centers (Handel 2007). This has allowed the university to work very closely with students and invest in professional development resources that help counselors meet the needs of students more effectively. Data from California indicate that students are much more likely to transfer if the community college has a transfer-going culture (Handel 2007). Developing a campus culture that promotes transfer might mean having a separate transfer center, counselors trained in transfer issues, honors programs, a four-year campus visitation program, and full-time articulation officers.

Increase administrative capacity to establish a strong transfer focus and ensure that students receive one-on-one support.

Morgan State University (MSU) has developed a transfer-going culture through the *Connect Program*, which serves as a "middleman" between the student wishing to transfer and the admissions office at MSU. The *Connect Program* works closely with students to avoid confusion they may experience over the application process. For example, transfer students in the *Connect Program* send their applications to the transfer center at MSU where program staff review applications to ensure completion before sending them to the admissions office.

Though an initial investment in administrative cost is necessary for these strategies to work, the results far outweigh such costs. Increasing administrative capacity to establish a strong transfer focus such as that at MSU, or increasing overall administrative capacity such as that in California ensures that students are receiving the one-on-one support essential to a process as complex as transfer. It also ensures that students

are provided with information appropriate to their needs, whether financial, academic, or both.

Establish Public Goals to Increase Transfer

Creating a public commitment to transfer is the responsibility of community colleges and four-year colleges and universities, and it requires that institutions hold themselves accountable to that commitment (Handel 2007). Publicizing such a commitment can serve as a significant motivator when establishing initiatives that address the needs of transfer students seeking bachelor's degrees. Both states and institutions can establish such public goals.

At the state level, Kentucky has established a goal to double the number of the state's bachelor's degree recipients by 2020 as a means of helping the state rise above the national average in degree attainment. In service of that goal, Kentucky plans to increase the number of students that transfer from two- to four-year institutions. Extra money is provided to institutions as an incentive to graduate more students, and monetary rewards are given to community colleges for producing associate's degrees and transfer students. Such incentives have created a push to establish scholarships for transfer students, as well as loan forgiveness programs for students in high-demand fields. Kentucky has also designed numerous student support programs to improve developmental education and to address other academic and information barriers. To keep the state and its institutions accountable, Kentucky has developed a Transfer Feedback Report, which provides the state with data on each institution's transfer efforts. The resulting data can be used both for accountability and for evaluating best practices.

At the institutional level, the University of California (UC) system has established similar goals for the number of transfer students it admits (Handel 2007). The new agreement among all California institutions, mentioned above, requires that the UC system give first priority to students from a California Community College over students from other four-year institutions. Usually, a four-year institution only considers transfer students if the school falls short of its freshman enrollment goals (Handel 2007). Lumping transfer students and freshmen together belies the notion that they are two separate populations from dissimilar backgrounds and require different student services.

Developing specific transfer targets such as those at UC can help to address transfer student needs, whether those are transfer grants, different student services, or different types of academic support. As states and

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institutions more closely examine the issue of transfer, they find that these students have unique needs. Creating a public commitment to transfer allows institutions and states to better address the specific obstacles that only transfer students face and, thereby, reduce multiple barriers.

Increase Information and Financial Aid for Transfer Students

Some states are able to offer financial aid targeted directly toward transfer students.

At community colleges, where the population tends to be low-income, students are less likely to apply for financial aid than students attending other types of institutions (Prince 2006). This is due to a variety of reasons, from lack of awareness of available aid, the complex types of aid and their processes, poor outreach at the institutional level, and insufficient financial aid. For that reason, it is essential that community colleges offer appropriate financial aid and guidance so that students are able to persist and transfer with few financial barriers. Students need such additional aid and support because the cost of attending a four-year college is significantly higher than that of a two-year college.

Some states are able to offer financial aid targeted directly toward transfer students. For example, Morgan State University offers a Bridge Grant to students who earn at least 24 credits before transfer. The grant provides \$1,000 each semester along with extra tuition scholarships if an associate's degree is earned. In addition, Kentucky has directed efforts toward alleviating financial barriers for transfer students. The state now provides financial incentives to four-year institutions to produce graduates, and offers similar rewards to two-year colleges to produce more associate's degrees and encourage transfer. Such incentives provide institutions with additional resources that, in turn, provide additional financial aid for transfer. In addition, scholarships for transfer students and loan-forgiveness programs for students in high-demand fields have been developed to address the financial barriers that these students face.

Providing students with financial aid information also increases student motivation to complete a bachelor's degree.

Providing students with financial aid information also increases student motivation to complete a bachelor's degree and can, therefore, speed up time to degree. An example is North Carolina, which has appropriated \$3.6 million to fund an additional financial aid officer at each state community college (Prince 2006). Other institutions use technology to improve financial aid participation. In 1995, the Connecticut Community College System centralized their financial aid system, creating a web-based, self-service financial aid system with 24/7 access to financial aid status, awards, and disbursement activity. The system also automates and combines enrollment and financial aid application processes to ensure that students learn about and receive appropriate grant aid for tuition, fees, books, and supplies. As a result, from 2001 to 2004, the number of

financial aid recipients in Connecticut increased by 40 percent (Prince 2006).

Increasing financial aid for transfer students is not simply a matter of making additional aid dollars available. Transfer students still face considerable informational and complexity barriers in the process of determining how to finance the final years of a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution. As with other aspects of the transfer process, these students face significant barriers due to their unique needs and unique status among postsecondary students; thus, comprehensive approaches are often advisable.

The practices highlighted above to improve the transfer pathway have had varying degrees of success throughout the country. All are initiatives that other states and institutions are replicating and are first steps in enabling a seamless process for students to enroll in and succeed at a four-year institution. As those with a vested interest in ensuring transfer examine the flaws in established processes, re-evaluation is often necessary as they confront the unique status and needs of the transfer student. States and colleges need to understand the populations they are serving and must continue to expand efforts to ensure that community colleges are a low-cost entry point to a bachelor's degree.

States and colleges need to understand the populations they are serving and expand efforts to ensure that community colleges are a low-cost entry point to a bachelor's degree.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Panelist Testimony

Interested members of the public were invited to provide comment on topics addressed in the three hearing sessions. Panelists discussed the social, financial, and complexity barriers that affect particular groups of students, such as adult learners and foster care youth. In addition, informational, complexity, and financial barriers that affect community college students generally—such as completion of the FAFSA, dependency issues, and the administration of financial aid offices—were brought to the attention of Committee members.

This session was moderated by Mr. Darryl A. Marshall.

Mr. Guy Gibbs **Interim Director of Financial Aid and Support Services** **Northern Virginia Community College**

Mr. Gibbs described the FAFSA Online tutorial produced by Northern Virginia Community College. He discussed how this tool is used to simplify the process of applying for financial aid.

Testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the FAFSA tutorial that we developed at Northern Virginia Community College (NoVA) for this academic year. Kerin Hilker-Balkissoon provided some information about NoVA. We have six campuses and two centers, all located within the Washington DC suburbs of Northern Virginia. Currently, our unduplicated headcount of enrollment stands at 65,000, with an anticipated enrollment of 80,000. We expect an enrollment of 85,000 by the year 2015. So, obviously, the issue of financial aid is a major concern because we have such a diverse student population in terms of socioeconomic, ethnic, and immigrant populations that qualify for financial aid.

We began to look at ways we might improve our process: we have a centralized financial aid office, but have financial aid counselors at each of our campuses and centers. It became obvious to us that the information provided by the U.S. Department of Education for completing FAFSA on the Web was just not enough. We needed to make the process more understandable and in plain language, which is different than someone sitting down at their computer, bringing up www.FAFSA.ed.gov, and completing the application online.

Interested members of the public were invited to provide comment on topics addressed in the three hearing sessions.

Mr. Gibbs described the FAFSA Online tutorial produced by Northern Virginia Community College.

NoVa's financial aid applicant pool increased significantly over the past year.

With a \$25,000 grant that we received from the President's contingency fund, our Director of Financial Aid worked with our staff, including the TV staff, and developed this FAFSA tutorial website, www.nvcc.edu/fafsahelp/. We hired two high school students to be the actors. One, named Gracie, was a high school junior at Oakton High School in Vienna, Virginia, and the other, Marshall, was a home-schooled student who was a dual enrollment student at Northern Virginia Community College. We felt that they would appeal to our younger students.

We put this website in operation in July 2007. We have had 5,482 hits to the main page. We are in the process now of analyzing the data and determining whether or not we should continue to seek funding for the website for 2008-09, revise the script, and put this up again for the use of students and families.

I would like to show you a little bit of the site, and then, if you have questions, I will be glad to answer those. [*Online FAFSA tutorial plays: Gracie and Marshall explain that a FAFSA is used to allocate funds for college to students and families. In the portion shown, the two actors demonstrate how to obtain a PIN online and by regular mail, and what materials are needed to fill out the FAFSA worksheet.*]

The online tutorial walks through each section of the FAFSA step-by-step and displays a picture of the section under discussion.

While we do find that the information the Department of Education has online is careful and detailed, we decided that, because of the student body that we have and the families that we serve, we needed to provide a more detailed explanation for completing the FAFSA. As I said, we do have financial aid counselors at each of our campuses, and specialists at two of our larger campuses. But they just did not have the time, nor did we find that students had the time to come to campus, talk with them, and seek assistance. So we went this route, and we believe it has been effective. We have seen our financial aid applicant pool increase significantly over the past year. We have already received the same number of applications as of December 6th that we received in all of 2006-07. So, somewhere, somehow, we are doing something right to reach our students, potential students, and their families as they apply for financial aid.

The online tutorial walks through each section of the FAFSA step-by-step and displays a picture of the section under discussion. The actors provide more detail about the instructions than does the Department of Education website, and they show how to complete each section. At the very end, there is a summary that refers visitors back to www.FAFSA.ed.gov to actually complete the FAFSA online.

As I said, we feel we have developed a product that our students have found useful, and that others will find useful as well. We are now in the process of evaluating where we should go for 2008-09. It is certainly one of the tools that we have found helpful at Northern Virginia Community College. Thank you.

Ms. Deborah Cochrane
Research Analyst
The Institute for College Access and Success

Ms. Cochrane described the Institute's research on financial aid at California Community Colleges. She also discussed the financial challenges students face in community colleges, specifically those in California.

Testimony. I want to start with a couple of quick facts about California Community Colleges. Number one, California relies on its community colleges more heavily than any other state does. Six in ten college students in California attend one of the state's 109 community colleges. We have very low fees, our way of saying tuition, and those can be waived by a very simple financial aid application form different from the FAFSA. When we talk about increasing federal or state grant aid to students, we have to be very explicit about the difference between the FAFSA and the fee waiver. And, speaking of federal and state grant aid, we also know that California community college students receive less federal and state grant aid than community college students in other states. So that is a problem because financial aid helps students both get in the door of community college and persist once they are there.

We wanted to learn what colleges were doing to help students access financial aid, so we visited 21 of the 109 community colleges in California, meeting with administrators in financial aid and other student services. Not surprisingly, we heard a lot of administrators speak of the same barriers that the Advisory Committee has identified to discuss today: in particular, the information, complexity, and financial barriers, all of which are present in the financial aid process itself. Each financial aid office we visited aimed to help students with these exact same barriers, but the methods that we found them using to do so were very different, and their effectiveness also varied. Students should be able to learn about financial aid, get help applying for it, and receive it when they need it regardless of where they choose to go to college, but the reality is that the service an individual student receives depends heavily on the college that he or she attends. I want to highlight a few of the differences that we found in our study.

Ms. Cochrane discussed the financial challenges students face at California Community Colleges.

The Institute learned what colleges were doing to help students access financial aid.

That many financial aid offices were not making information easily available was one of the report's findings.

At many colleges, the front line financial aid staff are relatively inexperienced.

As community college students represent an incredibly diverse group of students and often lack information about financial aid, it is, of course, critical for offices to be accessible to all students. We found that offices were not always making information easily available. One college with a large Latino population had no Spanish language materials, and some with many part-time and evening students had no evening office hours. On the other hand, a few offices were going out of their way to work collaboratively to make sure that faculty and student services were also promoting financial aid awareness. Some had also developed culturally sensitive approaches that went beyond translation to address differences in financial aid awareness, such as beginning a financial aid presentation with terms like “grant,” and coming to a universal definition for that.

The complexity of the aid process is also a well-known barrier to financial aid and college enrollment. It is understandable that students and parents face anxiety about filling out a FAFSA and have questions about it, but whether or not they can get those questions answered depends on which college they attend. At many colleges, the front line financial aid staff are relatively inexperienced, and able to answer only very basic questions. Some offices have recently changed their staffing patterns to put the most experienced staff up front rather than the least, which has had a tremendous impact on the number of errors that the aid office has had to process and the number of follow-up tasks for students.

We also found a similar range of practices for helping students complete the FAFSA. One of the colleges we visited had a financial aid computer lab that was staffed throughout the week so that students could drop in and get one-on-one help with their FAFSA whenever it was convenient for them. On the other hand, a few other colleges offered no help to students in the belief that one-on-one help should not be necessary for college students.

The differences in office practices and policies do not end once the application process is complete. Disbursement dates, when the check actually goes in the mail, range from before the semester starts to a full three weeks after the term begins. When to disburse aid is a complicated issue for colleges, but, certainly, students should be able to use their aid money to buy textbooks before they are behind in class. Some colleges with late disbursements were working collaboratively with book stores so that aid-eligible students could get bookstore credit, but not all of them.

Unlike these areas of wide variation in opinions and practice, one area where the opinions were unanimous was the insufficiency of available grant aid for community college students. The maximum Pell and state grant aid available to community college students in California covers less

than half of a typical cost of attendance, leaving low-income students with few financing options, all of them unattractive. In California, the problem is compounded by federal needs analysis. The state's high cost of living is not reflected, as adjustments are not made for regional cost differences, and the state's relatively high minimum wage serves to penalize working students. One financial aid officer with whom I spoke said that the biggest change in financial aid administration over the last 40 years was a change in focus from helping students to regulatory compliance. Offices balance the complexity of R2T4 (Return of Title IV) calculations and Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) administration with providing the hands-on assistance that many community college students need. Hands-on help may help students get in the door and get financial aid, but it is not required, and, as such, it often loses out in these balancing acts.

Our full report, *Green Lights and Red Tape*, was released last week and details our findings in common areas of administrative focus and student concern; the report is available for download at www.ticas.org/california. We also make recommendations for colleges, the State of California, and the federal government to help improve student access to financial aid. Many of our recommendations involve the barriers we are discussing here today, including simplifying the FAFSA and increasing grant aid for low-income students. Doing so would reduce the complexity and the financial barriers to student enrollment and persistence, as well as free up financial aid offices to provide more individual assistance to students who need it. We also recommend that colleges reevaluate their own policies to uncover and eliminate unnecessary barriers for students. Thank you.

Ms. Amy-Ellen Duke
Senior Policy Analyst
Center for Law and Social Policy

Ms. Duke discussed state and institutional policies that impact persistence for low-income working adults who attend community colleges. Her comments also emphasized the need for increased federal investment in building adult workforce skills.

Testimony. The Center for Law and Social Policy is a nonprofit research, analysis, technical assistance, and advocacy organization. We approach higher education as we do many of the issues that we look at, from the perspective of low- and moderate-income families and children. I am here to talk to you today primarily about access and success for low-income adults and older youth. We greatly appreciate the work that the Advisory Committee has done to advocate for the need for greater financial aid for this population in the past.

The Institute's report, *Green Lights and Red Tape*, provides recommendations for colleges, the State of California, and the federal government to improve student access to financial aid.

Ms. Duke discussed state and institutional policies that impact persistence for low-income working adults.

As all of you know, community colleges play a crucial role in increasing economic opportunity for adults by helping them escape dead-end, low-wage jobs and earn more by moving into careers that enable them to support their families. Community colleges also contribute to the economic competitiveness of our nation by educating workers in high-demand occupations. Yet current higher education policies often fail to support low-skilled, low-income adults who must support themselves and, often, their families, while going to school.

Community colleges play a crucial role in increasing economic opportunity for adults.

I would like to focus on two areas integral to the success of low-income adults at community colleges in which we feel the federal government needs to make a greater investment: first, supporting student success, and, second, making developmental education more effective and efficient. A greater federal investment in both of these areas, if structured thoughtfully, could build a body of knowledge that would allow us to look at what works for nontraditional adult students, as well as traditional-aged students. It is interesting to note that developmental education and completion are problems for traditional-aged students as well. In the interest of time, I am not going to discuss financial aid today, though it remains a crucial area for this population, as they could always use more of it.

The federal government needs to make a greater investment in supporting student success and making developmental education more effective and efficient.

Before speaking about these policies, I want to address a quick question and that is, “Why should we invest in adults?” It is a question that sometimes comes up in the higher education community: whether it is worth investing valuable resources in a population that might not succeed. The first reason is that we cannot afford not to. Employers in many sectors and regions of the country either face skills shortages or will in the near future. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 2004 and 2014, 24 of our 30 fastest growing jobs will require some degree of postsecondary education and training, yet nearly half of the U.S. workforce has a high school diploma or less. While K-12 reform is often seen as a panacea for this challenge, school reform cannot meet this demand alone. Approximately two-thirds of our 2020 workforce is beyond the reach of our elementary and secondary schools, and the current potential pool of skilled workers among prime-aged adults, defined here as the nearly 50 million people aged 18 to 44 with a high school diploma or less, is equal to the next 17 years of high school graduating classes, so the national figures are actually worse than the Washington State figures. So, in other words, we cannot afford not to invest in adults as a means of building a future skilled workforce.

A second reason to invest in adults is because it works. The MRDC Louisiana study, as well as research in Kentucky and Washington states, shows that if you invest in adults, they can succeed.

Now, I will discuss promoting student success. Those of you who have been in this area for a while know that the bulk of the federal investment in postsecondary education is in promoting access. For instance, the federal government spends 55 times as much on access as it does on success. While affordability remains a huge challenge and financial aid does increase completion, students need more than financial help. Not investing in success is penny-wise and pound-foolish as research shows that the biggest payoff to college is for those who complete credentials. Low-income adults often need help navigating postsecondary education and training offerings, applying for financial aid, setting career goals, gaining college success skills, and obtaining personal support from staff and other students.

Low-income adults often need help navigating postsecondary education and training offerings.

But community colleges have few resources to provide such intensive supports, and most states do not have dedicated funding streams for student supports, often cutting them during difficult budgetary times. I know that in previous hearings we have heard that the student-to-counselor ratio at many community colleges is 1,000 to one, so you can imagine the kind of personalized support that folks who need some additional support are able to get. To help low-income adults succeed in postsecondary education, colleges must provide comprehensive supports that promote student success. Supports, which research suggests can increase persistence and completion, include providing individualized counseling and proactive advising, enrolling students in cohorts or learning communities, developing college and career success courses, providing instructional support such as tutoring, providing work study supports with private employers in the area of the student's interest, tying small material incentives or scholarships to participation in student supports or exemplary performance, and offering financial assistance with child care and transportation. A handful of states such as Washington, Illinois, and California, are pursuing such innovative funding.

The federal government could follow innovative states such as Washington, Illinois, and California by investing more money in targeted student supports.

The federal government could follow these innovative states by investing more money in targeted student supports. One important step would be a proposal to include a student success grant of \$1,500 for every Pell Grant, which the college could then use for a student success coordinator and intensive student supports. The College Student Success Act, which was introduced this summer, would provide for a pilot demonstration project to examine the effectiveness of student supports in promoting access and success.

Moving on to developmental education: adult students, many of whom have been out of school for several years, are often ill-prepared for college level courses, and they do not reach the cut-off scores needed to enter credit, certificate, or college degree courses. If we want to increase the

number of adults who are achieving credentials, we need to increase the number of students who transition out of developmental education and into for-credit courses. In any given year, four out of ten adult students take at least one developmental education course in college, with even higher rates in community colleges. Clifford Adelman is one of the experts in this area. His longitudinal research has shown that 61 percent of a cohort of first-time community college students who were tracked through their twenties ultimately enrolled in at least one remedial college course. Unfortunately, this longitudinal research shows that there is an inverse relationship between the extent of a student's need for developmental education and student graduation rates.

If the number of adults who are achieving credentials is to be increased, the number of students who transition out of developmental education must be increased.

There are many interventions that have been shown to work with the population of students in need of developmental education. A number of institutions and states are exploring innovative developmental education, but on a small scale and often funded by foundations. Only a limited number of states are taking the lead. Promising practices being implemented include accelerating developmental education by enabling students to take the equivalent of two courses in one semester, blending developmental education with for-credit occupational or academic coursework, providing intensive counseling and advising, using learning communities or cohorts, and wrapping career counseling and elements of career success courses into remedial courses, along with investing more resources in the professional development of instructors.

Several years ago, Kentucky set the goal of doubling the number of graduates with baccalaureate degrees by 2020. But more than one half of first-time freshman entering Kentucky's colleges in 2004 required remediation in at least one area, and the drop-out rate for this population was twice that of prepared students. In 2006, the state established a developmental education task force that developed a comprehensive plan to strengthen preparedness and improve outcomes for those students needing remediation. One of their conclusions was that well-designed remediation programs require extra funding to provide enhanced services.

There are many interventions that have been shown to work with the population of students in need of developmental education.

In closing, increased financial aid is only one part of the postsecondary access and success equation for low-income adults. Once low-income adults enter community college, we have to ensure that they persist and exit with a credential or a degree. In order to ensure that happens, the federal government needs to increase its investment and supports that promote student success, as well as innovations that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of developmental education.

I hope the Advisory Committee will take our recommendations into consideration, and that you will accept my great thanks for the work that you have done, as well as for allowing me to speak today.

Mr. John Emerson
Postsecondary Education Advisor
Casey Family Programs

Mr. Emerson highlighted recent legislative changes that improve college access for foster care students. He then discussed the social and academic support needs of students from foster care who enter community colleges.

Testimony. Thank you very much for the opportunity to discuss the urgent need to improve college opportunities and success for the 20,000 young people from foster care who age out, or emancipate, every year in the United States. Community colleges are especially important for these young people. In the State of California, we know that 70 percent of the individuals who access their Chaffee educational training vouchers are attending community college.

Seventy percent of young people from foster care report that they have college-going goals and desires. The American dream has not escaped the most vulnerable among us. Research is difficult to come by, but it is estimated that only 20 percent of young people who have been in foster care ever enroll in a higher education program, with less than 2 percent ever getting a bachelor's degree. This is probably the most underrepresented population in higher education. However, there have been great strides in the last five years in both the policy and practice arenas. I would like to touch on a few of these and touch on some programs of note.

But I want to take a moment to thank the Advisory Committee for its focus on college access and success for low-income and disadvantaged students, as well as FASFA simplification. Many of the exciting changes taking place in financial aid have been initiated and supported by the work of the Advisory Committee, and have resulted in significant advances and improvements in student financial assistance programs for all students, especially those coming from foster care.

In particular, we are pleased with the changes realized this year in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. I want to mention three that have been especially important and that will become more important to thousands of young people coming from foster care in the near future. The first is a significant increase in the maximum Pell Grant for eligible students, including former foster youth. By virtue of their being independent at such a young age, usually at age 18, virtually all students from foster care qualify for the maximum Pell Grant. Increasing Pell Grant amounts will be of tremendous assistance to them. The second is

Mr. Emerson highlighted recent legislative changes that improve college access for foster care students.

Seventy percent of young people from foster care report that they have college-going goals and desires but only 20 percent ever enroll.

Changes in the definition of the independent student are helping to bring increased financial resources to former foster care youth.

The Foster Youth Success Initiative focuses on outreach to assist and support foster youth in college.

the enactment of changes in the professional judgment of financial aid administrators that allow them to consider the unique living conditions of some homeless youth. Homeless youth who emancipate from foster care are high in number, and, even among those attending college, there are many reports of students sleeping in cars and other unsafe situations. The third is the enactment of changes in the definition of the independent student, probably the most significant change that will help bring increased financial resources to these college students. These changes include adding orphan, ward of the court, and those coming from foster care to the definition of the independent student. Together these changes address some of the most common barriers facing emancipated young adults who desire college access and success, as well as the financial aid counselors who too often struggle to help them put together a complete financial package.

I want to spend a moment talking about a systems improvement initiative by the California Community College Chancellor's Office called Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI). Linda Michalowski, Vice Chancellor of Student Services and Special Programs at the California Community Colleges System, has been a strong advocate and leader of this initiative. FYSI is a systems approach that, to put it quite simply, has the goal of training and placing a foster youth liaison in each one of the 109 community colleges in California. These are not new positions, and these are not specially funded positions, but I am happy to report that all 109 community colleges in California now have a designated foster youth liaison, with specific roles and responsibilities to advocate for their students from foster care. This approach is starting to make a significant difference to these students' success. FYSI was covered in a November 9, 2007 story in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The article detailed the difference FYSI is making not only in the lives of financial aid officers, but in the lives of young people from foster care who now have a home base, someone they can count on to understand the issues they face and help them navigate the system.

The Foster Youth Success Initiative emphasizes four primary components and is working to put them in place. The first is having a dedicated, knowledgeable, trusted liaison in every college whom students know. The second is a focus on foster youth outreach in order to identify students from foster care currently enrolled and those still in the foster care pipeline. Many liaisons are now working with K-12 schools, child welfare, and independent living programs to provide young people who are about to emancipate with information on the community college system. The third is finding an "institutional champion" at every community college. This is someone at a high level who will champion the needs of students from foster care and develop support services that

meet their needs. Many times it is the president. Many times it is the senior student affairs officer or dean.

The fourth component is an external catalyst organization. FYSI is truly a systems approach that requires child welfare, the K-12 system, higher education, and the community college system to coordinate services, planning, and outreach. The external catalyst organization is one that schools have identified as absolutely essential to help them with this process. These schools are not being asked to do this work themselves. Seattle Central Community College is a good example of this. The college just started an FYSI approach that has 29 young adults from foster care enrolled. Their biggest need is housing; every one of the young people have housing issues, from critical to mild. These students are on their own at age 18, 19, and 20 with absolutely no support from family. This housing issue was insurmountable until the college collaborated with the local YMCA that holds the independent living contract for the State of Washington and helps with housing. Other community housing resources and experts are also now working with the community college liaison.

The states of Washington and California are the two epicenters for really innovative policies and practices that support foster youth in higher education. During the last legislative session, Washington passed the Passport to College Promise Program, which invites colleges in Washington, both four-year and two-year, to develop a viable plan for supporting their students from foster youth. The working committee of the Higher Education Coordinating Board is working on what a quality viable plan might look like. The most interesting part of this legislation is that performance incentive grant funds will be provided to colleges based on how many students from foster care not only enroll in their college, but are successful and are retained. As students successfully move toward program completion, incentive funds increase. Seattle Central Community College is looking at that model to eventually support much of its program.

Another example of innovative practice is the use of state need-based grants in the State of Washington. Young people from foster care are priority recipients for state need-based college grants. Using both state and federal funding sources, California and Washington can provide a full financial aid package for most students from foster care who attend a public community college, vocational/technical institute, or four-year college. There have been many advances in providing financial aid for these young people. It is now time to improve support services for them in college.

The last thing I want to mention is that there is some exciting news coming up in the proposed Higher Education Act reauthorization. For the

Washington and California are the two epicenters for innovative policies and practices that support foster youth in higher education.

Young people from foster care in Washington State are priority recipients of state need-based college grants.

first time, foster youth will be designated as having “distinct needs for specialized services.” This will mean that TRIO programs will provide increased outreach and support to these students. This will be very important to the college access and success of these students.

I think Maria may say it best. She is one of our scholarship recipients who just graduated from college. She went to both a community college and a four-year college. And I invite you to read this quote: “What does graduating from college mean to me? It means that I won. It means that my father was wrong when he said I was stupid and a waste of space. It means that every parent who wouldn’t let their children play with me because I was a bad kid from a bad family was wrong, but most of all, it means the freedom from my past and the ability to choose my future.”

The future of these young people depends, to a large extent, on the ability of community colleges to reach out to them and support them. Thank you.

The future of foster care youth depends on the ability of community colleges to reach out to them and support them.

Dr. Clifford Adelman
Senior Associate
Institute for Higher Education Policy

Dr. Adelman discussed how the financial, academic, and social barriers that affect students may differ based on the dependency status of the student. He also advocated for enhanced data tracking to count students who attend part-time and who transfer to community colleges.

Testimony. Margarita Benitez said it best, and it was repeated by Jane Oates: when students are not counted, they don’t count. Please remember that you have no idea, or maybe you do, of how many students we are not counting, particularly in community colleges. And what were they referring to when they said reform IPEDS? It is really a reform of the graduation rate survey, and the formula on which IPEDS is based.

You are only counted in America if you start in the fall term as a full-time student. That immediately knocks out two of every three community college students in this country and knocks out one of five four-year college students. And that is only on the front end. On the back end, we do not count transfer students, because we only count those who complete a degree from the same institution at which they started. And of the 1.2 million bachelor’s degrees that were awarded last year, 15 percent were community college transfers, so they are not counted. Another 20 percent started in one four-year college and finished at another for reasons ranging from my girlfriend moved to Arizona and I couldn’t live without her, to the young lady who starts at Oklahoma State in biology and discovers she

Dr. Adelman discussed how the financial, academic, and social barriers that affect students may differ based on the dependency status of the student.

wants to major in marine biology, so she has to go to the University of Rhode Island.

There are a lot of reasons these things happen. Families all over this country can tell you about them. You take a minority student to a school in the northwest corner of Iowa, some African American kid from the west side of Chicago, and his comfort level, when he gets to Iowa and realizes there is nobody else who looks like him within 400 miles, goes to zero. He graduates from University of Illinois, Chicago.

These people are not counted. They do not exist! And I am going to give you another example that is the shame of this formula and the Congress. In the year 2006, 700,000 members of the active duty military of the United States took at least one postsecondary course for credit. We do not count them. They are not in this formula because they are considered part-time students.

One of the things most speakers here today were very sensitive to on the topic of community colleges is the fact that your daughter and your brother-in-law live on different planets. Your brother-in-law has two kids, two cars, and two jobs. The chances that he will start full-time are something close to zero, compared to your daughter. The chance that he will complete a degree is much less than that of your daughter. When he does complete the degree, he will not do it fast. The data shows very clearly that the older you are, the less likely we are to count you. Surprise anybody?

And as for the military, we can send these people to Iraq to get blown up, but we are not going to acknowledge their persistence in education. In the year 2006, 28,000 earned associate's degrees, with an average time-to-degree of seven years. We do not count them because we stop counting associate's degrees at a time-to-degree of three years under this silly formula. In 2006, 8,000 earned bachelor's degrees, with an average time-to-degree of 12 years. We do not count them because we stop counting bachelor's degrees at six years. And who dreamed up this formula? This was written by two former professional basketball players then in Congress: Representative McMillan and Senator Bradley.

The proposed amendment to the Student Right-to-Know Act, now on Capitol Hill, needs support. It has been revised and sanded and polished in interactions with the community and the State of Texas. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is running a trial. It took the Texas board three months, starting in August, to get agreement on all the data elements, and about a week to write the code. Then they started running the data after Christmas with entering classes for all public institutions in the State of Texas, starting with academic year 1999-2000, which means

Not all students are counted in the federal government's IPEDS database on college graduation rates.

All students are not counted because only associate's degrees at a time-to-degree of three years and bachelor's degrees at six years are recorded.

that seven-year data for community colleges will be available for the first time, as well as for four-year colleges. Please support the legislation.

Colleges will learn more if they have to report these data by breaking their populations up between your daughter and your brother-in-law: for example, drawing a line separating ages 21-and-under from ages 22-and-up, and by full-time and part-time, and with a separate bin for transfers. Texas had a variation for reporting transfer that was very creative. Don't worry about the waivers and the bells and whistles—that is a product of negotiated rulemaking.

Colleges will learn more if these data are reported by breaking populations of ages 21-and-under from ages 22-and-up, and also separating full-time from part-time, and separating transfer students.

There is another way to look at the community college population that does not have much to do with money, but has to do with the way in which community college students behave. They do not go to one school and sit there. They are bouncing around the system, as are all college students. Margarita Benitez mentioned my data analysis that showed that over 60 percent of students attend more than one school. Some transfers are very purposeful, much like migrants who have North American Van Lines come to the house, pack up, and move them somewhere else. But there are also a lot of nomads out there. The metaphor of swirling has been used, but I think there are a number of kinds of nomads. There are people who jump from one school to another—three or more plus non-continuous enrollment—and that is stop-out behavior. And then there is a parallel group of students who are doing the same thing, but somewhere along the line they earn a credential, a certificate, or an associate's degree. Then there is a third group who are not transfers, and who, at the end of the period measured, wind up with more than 60 credits and no degree. That was another topic of discussion today: finding the 60+ credit group, hunting them down, seeing if you can get them back to school, and seeing if financial aid is part of the issue.

Over 60 percent of students attend more than one school. Transfers are heavier in the Mid-Atlantic states, East South Central, and Pacific.

The NELS:88 longitudinal study provides an eight-and-a-half-year history of traditional-aged students that shows features of each of these attendance patterns in terms of, for example, geography. Where are they more likely to turn up in this country? Where is the transfer percentage heavier? In terms of migration patterns, transfers are heavier in the Mid-Atlantic states, East South Central, and Pacific. One of those surprised me, namely East South Central, which is Kentucky, Alabama, and Mississippi. It is surprising that transfers are higher there. Transfers in New England are very limited, but that is not a surprise.

The issue of remediation was raised a couple of times today, and my point about that is, what remediation? If students need reading remediation, that is the kiss of death because if they are not reading, they are not reading math problems either. And I go back to splitting this population for analysis in terms of your daughter and your brother-in-law. For your

daughter's analysis, we can talk with the high schools. Your brother-in-law has been out of school for ten years, so we cannot talk with the high school. Dealing with adults is a completely different framework than dealing with traditional-aged students. The community colleges know this better than four-year colleges do, which is why reporting that way is helpful. I urge people to take a look at the notion of reading below the level of simple inference in the 12th grade as a powerful factor in determining how far they get in any form of higher education.

Now, for traditional-aged students, I also take a look at expectations of the student to earn a bachelor's degree. One of the things the U.S. Department of Education's longitudinal studies allows us to do is ask the same pairs of questions in the 10th grade, the 12th grade, and two years after the 12th grade. So instead of just taking one answer at one point in time, we can ask how consistent this person was in their educational expectations and whether those expectations rose or fell. Then you can do some analyses and correlations—more than correlations, some fancy statistical analysis. I urge you to take a look. In the information I handed out, I have given you some data by attendance patterns in terms of people who raise their expectations to bachelor's degrees, and then lower them from bachelor's degrees, and at what point in time. That is important for community colleges—this is all about community college beginners; it is not about four-year college students.

The State of Washington first used 15 credits as a threshold and then 30 credits. The research that I have done has shown that 20 additive credits in the first calendar year is the tipping point—that is the metaphor Washington State has used. Mine is: that is when you get higher octane gasoline. Take a look at who that applies to and who it is pushing through.

When students who started at community college as traditional-aged students, but did not finish any degree by the age of 26 or 27 are asked why they did not finish, the number one reason right down the line is personal and family. Which can mean a lot of things, including, my girlfriend moved to Arizona and I got in a funk, to, my father got sick, to a variety of things of that nature. Among students who dropped out permanently early in their college careers, mood and lifestyle play a role. That is, some people discover they do not like school. We think everybody loves it, but there are some people who do not. Later on is when finances kick in, not in the early years. It is not only financial aid, it is also about money management, as you well know.

I urge you take a look at the data I provided in the hand-outs. I would be glad to talk with you about these in more detail at some other time. Thank you very much.

If students need reading remediation, that is the kiss of death because if they are not reading, they are not reading math problems either.

Dealing with adults is a completely different framework than dealing with traditional-aged students.

CONCLUSION

The panelists in this symposium exhibit an obvious commitment to our nation's community college students. The discussion in each session provides clear evidence that the higher education community is taking important steps to improve college access and success at the community college level. The barriers analyzed during the symposium show degrees of similarity, important to understanding that students encounter a series of common and interrelated barriers in the areas of enrollment, persistence, and transfer. Recognizing these common barriers—academic, social, informational, complexity, and financial—provides ground for collaboration among educational leaders and policymakers as they design programs to reduce or eliminate them.

Collaborative effort is critical for a community that serves a unique and diverse segment of the higher education population. Unlike four-year colleges, community colleges maintain open door policies that allow a variety of students with differing ages, educational objectives, and college preparation levels to pursue their goals and attain degrees. As America's participation in the global economy warrants the development of more workers with bachelor's degrees, many states and institutions have recognized the need to focus on community colleges as a resource to encourage students to enroll, persist, and transfer to a bachelor's degree-granting institution. It is the Committee's hope that the information gathered and analyzed here can be used by a wide audience in service of these educational and workforce goals.

While this symposium and the proceedings analysis have articulated the range of activities in which community colleges are engaged in order to advance the educational attainment of their students, questions still arise that require further attention and study. Responding to the following issues will help to alleviate the impact of inevitable political and economic changes to which community colleges and their students are subjected:

- Many community college students spend time in remedial courses, learning skills they should have mastered in the K-12 system. Their lack of preparedness for higher education costs them both time and money, both of which they hold in short supply. How can improvements be made to the elementary and secondary school systems to address that?
- Students at four-year colleges are taking up to five and six years to complete a bachelor's degree. As this becomes common practice, college administrators should determine what is causing this phenomenon and work to address that. If students at four-year colleges require more than four years to complete a degree, what

There is clear evidence that the higher education community is taking important steps to improve college access and success at the community college level.

Collaborative effort is critical to advance the educational attainment of community college students.

impact does that have on an institution's ability to accommodate additional transfer students?

- Remediation is a common practice at many levels of education: secondary, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities. In order to make remediation as effective as possible, continued attention needs to be directed toward determining whether and how remediation reduces or increases costs, both to the student and the institution.
- While community colleges are making every effort to maintain open door policies so that they may serve the maximum number of students, no such capacity is infinite. What are the limitations in capacity of community colleges? When and how will they be reached? How can states and institutions respond to any impending limitations?
- As states and institutions nationwide move toward increasing the number of students who transfer from two-year to four-year colleges, articulation and transfer agreements are being developed unique to state needs. A national review of existing articulation and transfer agreements and an analysis of their effectiveness could articulate broad precepts that might assist other states attempting to facilitate transfer.

Further attention must be given to additional issues that impede students' educational attainment.

The core matters of the concerns and questions described above are relative to collaboration among states, community colleges, and the K-12 system in the areas of informational and academic barriers. In addition, attention to the effectiveness of existing remediation would potentially help to reduce financial barriers for thousands of students, as well as save federal and state funds. A study of capacity issues, including a trend in longer time-to-degree among four-year college students, will help states address multiple barriers, and may yield some additional insights on the social barriers that students face. Finally, a national review of articulation and transfer agreements would eliminate substantial complexity for students, institutions, and states.

The Advisory Committee looks forward to a continuing discussion of the important role that community colleges play in the pathway to achieving a bachelor's degree.

The Advisory Committee looks forward to a continuing discussion of the important role that community colleges play in the pathway to achieving a bachelor's degree for millions of America's students. Acting on the information provided in this report, and looking ahead to address the questions raised above, are a start to making college dreams a reality for a large segment of our population.

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APPENDIX A: SYMPOSIUM PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Clifford Adelman
Senior Associate
Institute for Higher Education Policy

Clifford Adelman plays a senior role in the Institute for Higher Education Policy's (IHEP) national and international portfolio of research projects focused on assessment, higher education access, and student mobility. He also works with issues that have been central to much of his career, including degree completion rates, standardized testing, transfer patterns, and the role of community colleges. Prior to joining IHEP, Dr. Adelman served for nearly 30 years as a Senior Research Analyst at the U.S. Department of Education and contributed to key background studies of the high school curriculum and to the landmark report, *A Nation at Risk* (1983). He also designed the higher education follow-up to that report, *Involvement in Learning* (1984), which served as a platform for the assessment movement in higher education over the following decade. Before working in government, Dr. Adelman served in academia as an administrator and educator. Additionally, he is the author of three commercially published books, and a member of various education-focused committees. Dr. Adelman holds a bachelor's degree from Brown University as well as master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Chicago.

Dr. James Applegate
Vice President, Academic Affairs
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education



James Applegate's work promotes partnerships between higher education and external constituencies that foster economic and community development. Participating organizations have included the Carnegie Foundation, Council of Graduate Schools, Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Lumina Foundation, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. Dr. Applegate led the implementation of the nationally recognized *Go Higher Kentucky College Access Campaign*, which brought record numbers of adults and low-income, at-risk youth into the postsecondary pipeline; he also led Kentucky's effort as a founding partner in the SREB *Go Alliance* to support college access across the South. He served as a consultant on a Lumina-funded/SREB-led initiative advancing adult education in the South and has been a part of Kentucky's successful efforts to increase adult participation in postsecondary education. Prior to his current position at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, Dr. Applegate was a Professor of Communication, Department Chair, and Chair of the University Senate at the University of Kentucky. Among other activities, Dr. Applegate serves as a member of the Campus Compact's Consulting Corp, working with universities across the nation to increase their capacity to engage teaching and research with public needs. He received a PhD in communication from the University of Illinois.

Dr. Thomas R. Bailey
Director
Community College Research Center
Teachers College, Columbia University



Thomas Bailey is also the George and Abby O'Neill Professor of Economics and Education in the Department of International and Transcultural Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University. He is an economist, with specialties in education, labor economics, and econometrics. Dr. Bailey directs the Community College Research Center (CCRC), which conducts a large portfolio of qualitative and quantitative research based on fieldwork at community colleges and analysis of national- and state-level datasets. He is involved in multiple projects, including *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count*, a national initiative that promotes change to improve student success at community colleges, supported by the Lumina Foundation for Education, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. In July 2006, Dr. Bailey became the Director of the National Center for Postsecondary Research. Among a variety of projects, the Postsecondary Center will conduct evaluations of two widely-used programs: one that allows high school students to enroll in college courses (dual enrollment), and another that establishes remediation groups or learning communities for low-skilled students. Dr. Bailey holds a PhD in labor economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Dr. Margarita Benitez
Senior Associate
National Articulation and Transfer Network



Margarita Benitez has been the coordinator for the National Articulation and Transfer Network (NATN) since 2006, when it came under the auspices of the Institute for Higher Education Policy and the Alliance for Equity in Higher Education. Prior to this position, she held leadership positions at the Cayey campus of the University of Puerto Rico. She has also been active in the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and held various positions at the U.S. Department of Education. As a senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, she coordinated the nationwide launching of federal programs such as GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) and Title V (Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions). She oversaw the Title III and Title V institutional development programs for all minority-serving institutions of higher education, as well as other federal programs designed to help disadvantaged students prepare for, enter, and succeed in postsecondary education (Upward Bound, Talent Search, Educational Opportunity Centers). Dr. Benitez holds degrees from Vassar College, Middlebury College, and Columbia University.

Mr. Christian Campagnuolo
Assistant Vice President
Marketing & Media Relations,
Valencia Community College



Christian Campagnuolo is a marketing professional with over 11 years of experience in brand marketing, advertising, promotions, strategic planning, and new business development. His previous positions include Vice President of Strategic Marketing and Communications at Visionworks, an Orlando, Florida-based ad agency; and Brand Manager for the Walt Disney Company. Mr. Campagnuolo holds a master's degree in business administration from Rollins College, Crummer School, and a bachelor's degree in marketing from Adelphi University in New York.

Ms. Deborah Cochrane
Research Analyst
The Institute for College Access and Success

Deborah Cochrane's work is focused on understanding the barriers associated with college enrollment and persistence. Before joining the Institute, Ms. Cochrane worked as a Policy Analyst at the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, primarily on issues related to community college affordability and finance policy. Her background includes work in policy analysis, research, labor, and social services, including direct service and management roles within a variety of nonprofit settings. Ms. Cochrane holds an MSW with a focus on social policy from San Francisco State University and a BA from the University of Michigan.

Ms. Amy-Ellen Duke
Senior Policy Analyst
Center for Law and Social Policy

Amy-Ellen Duke's work focuses on job advancement and access to and success in postsecondary education and adult education/English as a Second Language for low-income adults. She analyzes and advocates for federal higher education and workforce policies that better serve low-income adults and provides technical assistance to state governments to help them better serve low-income adults and older youth. She has facilitated state policy academies on adult education/ESL and postsecondary education for advocates engaged in the Working Poor Families Project. She also co-authored *Wising Up: How Government Can Partner With Business to Increase Skills and Advance Low-Wage Workers*. In 2006, Ms. Duke was selected by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education to participate in its National Associates' program. She is a member of the National Coalition for Literacy and serves on the National Advisory Committee for the Achieving the Dream national initiative, which is intended to help more community college students succeed. Previously, Ms. Duke was a Research Associate at the Urban Institute, where she contributed to several evaluations of state-level welfare reform

and workforce development programs. Ms. Duke earned a Master's in Divinity, with a specialization in social ethics, from Emory University and a BA from Swarthmore College.

Mr. John Emerson
Postsecondary Education Advisor
Casey Family Programs

John Emerson is the Postsecondary Education Advisor for Casey Family Programs, a Seattle-based national operating foundation that has served children, youth, and families in the child welfare system since 1966. Mr. Emerson currently oversees postsecondary education and training practice and policy advocacy for young adults from foster care. He also directs the Casey Family Scholars Program, a national scholarship program for college students from foster care that provides over 400 scholarships and support services to students from 48 states. In addition, Mr. Emerson provides technical assistance to states, higher education systems, and organizations regarding improving the delivery of financial aid and support services to their students from foster care. He recently coauthored *It's My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training* and *Financial Aid Excerpt*. He also authored *From Foster Care to College*, an article which appeared in the Winter 2007 issue of *Leadership Exchange*. Mr. Emerson received his Master's in Education from the University of Washington.

Ms. Shonda Gray
Director
Transfer Center Connect Program
Morgan State University (MSU)



Shonda Gray currently serves as the Director of the Transfer Center at Morgan State University (MSU). She also has experience in student affairs, having served as an Admissions Officer at MSU and as the Coordinator for Freshmen Admissions at the University of Maryland, College Park. Ms. Gray has been a member of several professional organizations, including the Potomac and Chesapeake Association for College Admissions Counseling, where she served as Chair of the College Fair Committee as well as a conference panelist. She is a member of the National Articulation and Transfer Network as well as the Maryland Higher Education Commission's Student Transfer Advisory Council. She holds a BA in political science from MSU and an MS in criminal justice from the University of Baltimore.

Ms. Melissa Gregory
College Director of Student Financial Aid
Montgomery College

Melissa Gregory has worked as a financial aid administrator in the Washington DC metropolitan region for 27 years. She has been employed at several schools, including George Washington

University, University of Maryland at College Park, Frederick Community College, and, currently, Montgomery College, a multi-campus community college in Maryland that serves over 32,000 students each year. She is active in financial aid legislative issues and has testified at both the federal and state levels in support of financial aid application simplification and increased access to college for all students. Ms. Gregory has served as a trainer for the Washington DC, Delaware, and Maryland Associations of Student Financial Aid Administrators as well as the Eastern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. She speaks frequently to community groups, high schools, and middle schools concerning the financial aid application process and aid programs. Ms. Gregory is a graduate of Montgomery College and holds bachelor's and master's degrees from George Washington University.

Ms. Kerin A. Hilker-Balkissoon
Director
Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program
Northern Virginia Community College



Kerin Hilker-Balkissoon joined the faculty at Northern Virginia Community College in November 2001 as a Counselor for students with disabilities. In November 2005, she was selected as Director of *The Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program*. Ms. Hilker-Balkissoon has a diverse professional background, including prior experience in high school, nonprofit, and university settings. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and a master's degree in counseling from Johns Hopkins University. She is currently pursuing coursework toward her doctoral degree in community

college education at George Mason University.

Mr. Richard Kazis
Senior Vice President
Jobs for the Future



Richard Kazis leads Jobs for the Future's (JFF) policy and research efforts. In the early 1990s, he directed the organization's initial multi-site initiative on school-to-career models. Since then, he has led projects on local organizations that link schools and employers, community colleges and low-income populations, policies to promote low-wage worker advancement, and the emerging role of labor market intermediaries in workforce development. Mr. Kazis directs JFF's contributions to *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count*. JFF coordinates the initiative's effort to improve state policies in seven targeted states. Mr. Kazis also directs JFF's *Double the*

Numbers initiative. *Double the Numbers* is designed to advance state and national policies that can significantly increase the number of young people who make it to and through college. Mr. Kazis is a former teacher at an alternative high school for returning drop-outs and has also supervised a Neighborhood Youth Corps program, among other activities. He is President of the

Board of the Brookline Education Foundation. Mr. Kazis is a graduate of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Ms. Linda Michalowski
Vice Chancellor,
Student Services and Special Programs
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office



Linda Michalowski is responsible for the policies and programs of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). Her oversight includes outreach, admissions, assessment, orientation, financial aid, counseling, transfer and articulation, student government, child care, disabled student services, and special services for single parents and other disadvantaged and underprepared students. She worked for the CCCCCO's Governmental Relations and External Affairs division from 1998 to 2003, during which time she served as Interim Vice Chancellor as well as Director of Strategic Communications and Federal Relations. Prior to that, she was the Chancellor's Office Coordinator for Student Financial Assistance Programs. Ms. Michalowski has also served on the American Association of Community Colleges and Association of Community College Trustees Joint Commission on Federal Relations, and was the 1997 recipient of their Community College Governmental Relations Award. She led the development and implementation of the system-wide community college public awareness campaigns: *The Way California Works* and *I Can Afford College*.

Mr. David K. Moldoff
Founder and CEO
AcademyOne



David Moldoff is responsible for AcademyOne's overall strategy, with specific emphasis on technology infrastructure and integration of applications and services. He is an entrepreneur with over 30 years of experience in launching and managing new companies and new products in technology for higher education. Before forming AcademyOne, Mr. Moldoff was Senior Vice President of Solutions Architecture and Infrastructure for SunGard/SCT, Founder and CEO of Applied Business Technologies, and the architect of PowerCAMPUS, a Microsoft-based ERP system for higher education institutions. He is currently an active board member for the two major technology standards organizations: the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council and the Open Enterprise Application Integration Foundation for Higher Education.

Ms. Jane Oates
Executive Director
New Jersey Commission on Higher Education



Jane Oates is the Executive Director of the Commission on Higher Education and Senior Policy Advisor to New Jersey Governor Jon S. Corzine. Prior to joining Governor Corzine's staff, Ms. Oates was the Senior Policy Advisor on higher education, national service, adult literacy, education research, and workforce issues to Senator Edward Kennedy on the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP). While serving in the Senate, she was the chief staff liaison to Democratic members of the HELP Committee for two reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act, the reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research, the creation and implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, and the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act.

Dr. Angela Oriano-Darnall
Project Coordinator
Survey of Entering Student Engagement
Community College Survey of Student Engagement



Angela Oriano-Darnall is the Project Coordinator for the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE), an initiative of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) at the University of Texas at Austin. For years, CCSSE has provided institutions with data useful in creating, shaping, and improving programs that can increase persistence. Institutions use the information that CCSSE provides to measure their own success in certain areas of engagement. SENSE is a new instrument that will complement CCSSE and will be administered for the first time this spring. Prior to joining CCSSE, Dr. Oriano-Darnall served as the Director of Developmental Education at Southeastern Community College in West Burlington, Iowa, where she led the college's tutoring, supplemental instruction, and disability support services. She has also managed the college's literacy, adult basic education, and corrections education programs, and she has taught as an adjunct. In addition, Dr. Oriano-Darnall serves as a lecturer in the University of Texas' Department of Educational Administration.

Mr. David Prince
Assistant Director
Research and Analysis
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges



David Prince is responsible for all policy research affecting low-income and underserved student populations for Washington State’s two-year college system. His portfolio includes adult basic skills, financial aid, welfare reform, and students of color. His research agenda spans access and participation, retention, and performance outcomes and accountability. Mr. Prince researched and co-authored a report, *Building Pathways to Success for Low Skill Adult Learners*, that identified a particular “tipping point” for earnings and education. The report found that at least one year of college plus credential was necessary in order for low-skilled adults attending community colleges as first-time students to have the highest potential earnings after college. This report has spurred a number of state and system policies and practices to increase the attainment of underprepared adults.

Dr. Lashawn Richburg-Hayes
Senior Research Associate
Young Adults and Postsecondary Education
MDRC



Lashawn Richburg-Hayes’ current research focuses on measuring various effects of new forms of financial aid, enhanced student services, and curricular and instructional innovations on community college retention and credit accumulation and quasi-experimental methods of data analysis. Dr. Richburg-Hayes is a lead investigator for the following MDRC projects: *Achieving the Dream* and *Opening Doors*, a demonstration designed to help nontraditional students (at-risk youth, low-wage working parents, and unemployed individuals) earn college credentials as a pathway to better jobs with higher pay. Dr. Richburg-Hayes earned a BS from the Industrial and Labor Relations School of Cornell University and a PhD in economics from Princeton University.

**APPENDIX B:
ADVERTISEMENTS FROM EDUCATIONISIN.COM**

**BAKING & PASTRY
MANAGEMENT**
VALENCIA

One of Valencia Community College's thirty-three A.S. career programs with a 98% placement rate. Check out all of the fabulous options, including A.A. pre-major programs which guarantee admission to a state university, at EDUCATIONISIN.COM.

1967

**BAKING & PASTRY
MANAGEMENT**
SAMPLE AD

Fall classes begin August 27.

EDUCATION
It's Not Just A Team of People!

ARCHITECTURE
VALENCIA

One of Valencia Community College's thirty-three pre-major for Valencia's A.A. degree, which guarantees admission to a state university. Check out all of the fabulous options, including A.S. career programs with a 98% placement rate, at EDUCATIONISIN.COM.

Fall classes begin August 27.

1967

ARCHITECTURE
SAMPLE AD

EDUCATION
It's Not Just A Team of People!

JOURNALISM
 **VALENCIA**



One of Valencia Community College's forty-two pre-majors for Valencia's A.A. degree, which guarantees admission to a state university. Check out all of the fabulous options, including A.S. career programs with a 98% placement rate, at EDUCATIONISHERE.com.

1967

EDUCATION
 You Can Never Have Too Much.

Full classes begin August 27.

JOURNALISM
SAMPLE AD

RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT
 **VALENCIA**



One of Valencia Community College's thirty-three A.S. career programs with a 97% placement rate. Check out all of the fabulous options, including A.A. pre-major programs which guarantee admission to a state university, at EDUCATIONISHERE.com.

1967

EDUCATION
 It Never Goes Out Of Season.

Full classes begin August 27.

RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT
SAMPLE AD

APPENDIX C: CHARTS FROM CCSSE PRESENTATION

Figure 1

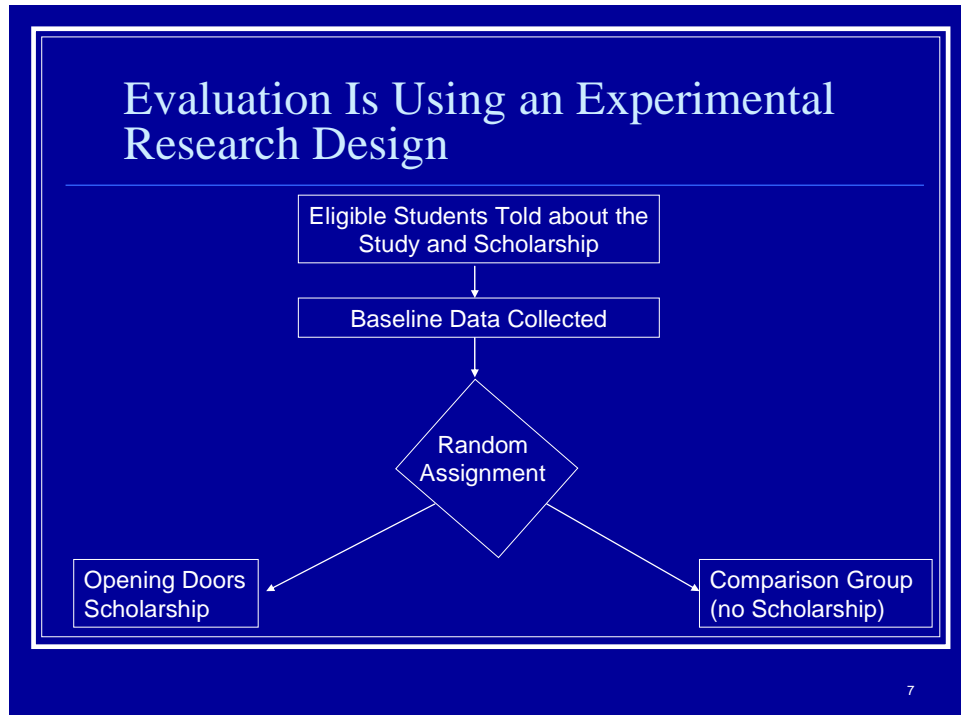


Figure 2

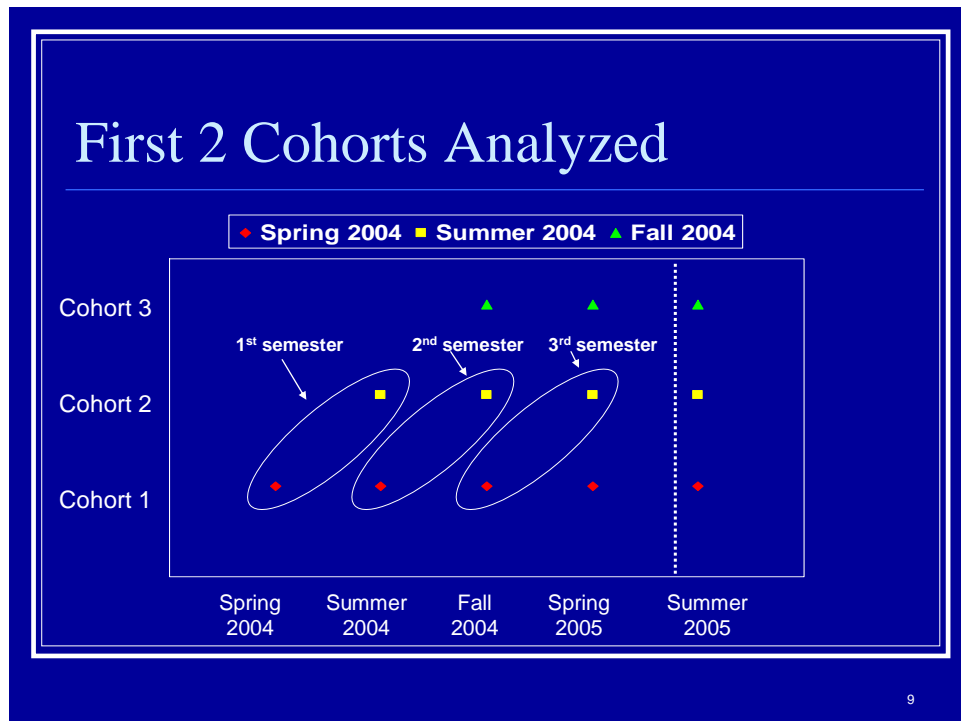


Figure 3

Selected Findings (n = 537)			
	Treatment	Control	Impact
Registration			
First semester	74.6	70.0	4.5
Second semester	57.5	39.3	18.2 ***
Third semester	49.1	37.9	11.2 ***
Number of courses passed			
First semester	1.5	1.2	0.4 ***
Second semester	1.2	0.7	0.4 ***
Third semester	1.1	0.8	0.3 **
Total credits earned			
First semester	4.5	3.4	1.1 ***
Second semester	3.4	2.1	1.2 ***
Third semester	3.1	2.2	0.9 **

**APPENDIX D:
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF**

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CLASS OF 2007 (I.E., TERM EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 30, 2007)

Ms. Norine Fuller

Executive Director
The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandise
(U.S. House of Representatives appointee, service began 12/04/01; reappointed 10/8/04)

CLASS OF 2008 (I.E., TERM EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 30, 2008)

Ms. Judith N. Flink (Chairperson)

Executive Director of University Student Financial Services
The University of Illinois at Chicago
(U.S. House of Representatives appointee, service began 11/02/99; reappointed 11/2/02 and 11/02/05)

Mr. Allison G. Jones

Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs
Student Academic Support
Office of the Chancellor
The California State University
(Secretary of Education appointee, service began 06/07)

Dr. Claude O. Pressnell, Jr. (Vice Chairperson)

President
Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA)
(United States Senate appointee, service began 5/20/03; reappointed 9/12/05)

CLASS OF 2009 (I.E., TERM EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 30, 2009)

Mr. René A. Drouin

President and CEO
New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation
(United States Senate appointee, service began 10/02/03; reappointed 7/20/06)

Mr. Darryl A. Marshall

Director, Student Financial Aid
Florida State University
(Secretary of Education appointee, service began 10/01/03; reappointed 9/19/06)

Mr. Juan C. O'Connell

Student Member
(Secretary of Education appointee, service began 2/28/07)

Mr. Robert M. Shireman

Founder and President

The Institute for College Access & Success, Inc.

(U.S. House of Representatives appointee, service began 1/21/04; reappointed 9/28/06)

CLASS OF 2010 (I.E., TERM EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 30, 2010)

Mr. Clare M. Cotton

President (retired)

Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts

(United States Senate appointee, service began 11/12/02; reappointed 7/21/04 and 10/22/07)

Dr. Scott Andrew Giles

Vice President for Policy, Research, and Planning
and Assistant to the Board of Directors

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation

(Secretary of Education appointee, service began 9/24/07)

Mr. Joseph A. Russo

Director, Student Financial Strategies

Office of Student Financial Services

University of Notre Dame

(Secretary of Education appointee, service began 10/9/07)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STAFF

William J. Goggin

Executive Director

Julie Johnson

Associate Director

Michelle Asha Cooper

Deputy Director

Tracy D. Jones

Senior Administrative Officer

Brent Evans

Associate Director

Zakiya Smith

Assistant Director

Hope M. Gray

Executive Officer

Jeneva Stone

Senior Writer

Jodut Hashmi

Assistant Director

APPENDIX E: AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The Advisory Committee was established by an act of Congress in 1986. Section 491 of the Higher Education Act as amended contains the Committee's Congressional mandate. A copy of this section as it appears in the law follows:

SEC. 491. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE.--(1) There is established in the Department an independent Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (hereafter in this section referred to as the "Advisory Committee") which shall provide advice and counsel to the Congress and to the Secretary on student financial aid matters. (2) The purpose of the Advisory Committee is-- (A) to provide extensive knowledge and understanding of the Federal, State, and institutional programs of postsecondary student assistance; (B) to provide technical expertise with regard to systems of needs analysis and application forms; and (C) to make recommendations that will result in the maintenance of access to post-secondary education for low- and middle-income students.

(b) INDEPENDENCE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.--In the exercise of its functions, powers, and duties, the Advisory Committee shall be independent of the Secretary and the other offices and officers of the Department. Notwithstanding Department of Education policies and regulations, the Advisory Committee shall exert independent control of its budget allocations, expenditures and staffing levels, personnel decisions and processes, procurements, and other administrative and management functions. The Advisory Committee's administration and management shall be subject to the usual and customary Federal audit procedures. Reports, publications, and other documents of the Advisory Committee, including such reports, publications, and documents in electronic form, shall not be subject to review by the Secretary. The recommendations of the Committee shall not be subject to review or approval by any officer in the executive branch, but may be submitted to the Secretary for comment prior to submission to the Congress in accordance with subsection (f). The Secretary's authority to terminate advisory committees of the Department pursuant to section 448(b) of the General Education Provisions Act ceased to be effective on June 23, 1983.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.--(1) The Advisory Committee shall have 11 members of which-- (A) 3 members shall be appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader, (B) 3 members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader, and (C) 5 members shall be appointed by the Secretary including, but not limited to representatives of States, institutions of higher education, secondary schools, credit institutions, students, and parents. (2) Not less than 7 members of the Advisory Committee shall be individuals who have been appointed on the basis of technical qualifications, professional standing and demonstrated knowledge in the fields of higher education and student aid administration, need analysis, financing postsecondary education, student aid delivery, and the operations and financing of student loan guarantee agencies.

(d) FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE.--The Advisory Committee shall--(1) develop, review, and comment annually upon the system of needs analysis established under part F of this title; (2) monitor, apprise, and evaluate the effectiveness of student aid delivery and recommend improvements; (3) recommend data collection needs and student information requirements which would improve access and choice for eligible students under this title and assist the Department of education in improving the delivery of student aid; (4) assess the impact of legislative and administrative policy proposals; (5) review and comment upon, prior to promulgation, all regulations affecting programs under this title, including proposed regulations; (6) recommend to the Congress and to the Secretary such studies, surveys, and analyses of student financial assistance programs, policies, and practices, including the special needs of low-income, disadvantaged, and nontraditional students, and the means by which the needs may be met, but nothing in this section shall authorize the committee to perform such studies, surveys, or analyses; (7) review and comment upon standards by which financial need is measured in determining eligibility for Federal student assistance programs; (8) appraise the adequacies and deficiencies of current student financial aid information resources and services and evaluate the effectiveness of current student aid information programs; and (9) make special efforts to advise Members of Congress and such Members' staff of the findings and recommendations made pursuant to this paragraph.

(e) OPERATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE.--(1) Each member of the Advisory Committee shall be appointed for a term of 3 years, except that, of the members first appointed-- (A) 4 shall be appointed for a term of 1 year; (B) 4 shall be appointed for a term of 2 years; and (C) 3 shall be appointed for a term of 3 years, as designated at the time of appointment by the Secretary. (2) Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term of a predecessor shall be appointed only for the remainder of such term. A member of the Advisory Committee shall, upon request, continue to serve after the expiration of a term until a successor has been appointed. A member of the Advisory Committee may be reappointed to successive terms on the Advisory Committee. (3) No officers or full-time employees of the Federal Government shall serve as members of the Advisory Committee. (4) The Advisory Committee shall elect a Chairman and a Vice Chairman from among its members. (5) Six members of the Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum. (6) The Advisory Committee shall meet at the call of the Chairman or a majority of its members.

(f) SUBMISSION TO DEPARTMENT FOR COMMENT.--The Advisory Committee may submit its proposed recommendations to the Department of Education for comment for a period not to exceed 30 days in each instance.

(g) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.--(1) Members of the Advisory Committee may each receive reimbursement for travel expenses incident to attending Advisory Committee meetings, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by section 5703 of title 5, United States Code, for persons in the Government service employed intermittently.

(h) PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES.--(1) The Advisory Committee may appoint such personnel as may be necessary by the Chairman without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates, but no individual so appointed shall be paid in excess of the rate authorized for GS-18 of the General Schedule. The Advisory Committee may appoint not more than 1 full-time equivalent, nonpermanent, consultant without regard to the

provisions of title 5, United States Code. The Advisory Committee shall not be required by the Secretary to reduce personnel to meet agency personnel reduction goals. (2) In carrying out its duties under the Act, the Advisory Committee shall consult with other Federal agencies, representatives of State and local governments, and private organizations to the extent feasible. (3)(A) The Advisory Committee is authorized to secure directly from any executive department, bureau, agency, board, commission, office, independent establishment, or instrumentality information, suggestions, estimates, and statistics for the purpose of this section and each such department, bureau, agency, board, commission, office, independent establishment, or instrumentality is authorized and directed, to the extent permitted by law, to furnish such information, suggestions, estimates, and statistics directly to the Advisory Committee, upon request made by the Chairman. (B) The Advisory Committee may enter into contracts for the acquisition of information, suggestions, estimates, and statistics for the purpose of this section. (4) The Advisory Committee is authorized to obtain the services of experts and consultants without regard to section 3109 of title 5, United States Code and to set pay in accordance with such section. (5) The head of each Federal agency shall, to the extent not prohibited by law, cooperate with the Advisory Committee in carrying out this section. (6) The Advisory Committee is authorized to utilize, with their consent, the services, personnel, information, and facilities of other Federal, State, local, and private agencies with or without reimbursement.

(i) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.--In each fiscal year not less than \$800,000, shall be available from the amount appropriated for each such fiscal year from salaries and expenses of the Department for the costs of carrying out the provisions of this section.

(j) SPECIAL ANALYSES AND ACTIVITIES.--The Advisory Committee shall-- (1) monitor and evaluate the modernization of student financial aid systems and delivery processes, including the implementation of a performance-based organization within the Department, and report to Congress regarding such modernization on not less than an annual basis, including recommendations for improvement; (2) assess the adequacy of current methods for disseminating information about programs under this title and recommend improvements, as appropriate, regarding early needs assessment and information for first-year secondary school students; (3) assess and make recommendations concerning the feasibility and degree of use of appropriate technology in the application for, and delivery and management of, financial assistance under this title, as well as policies that promote use of such technology to reduce cost and enhance service and program integrity, including electronic application and reapplication, just-in-time delivery of funds, reporting of disbursements and reconciliation; (4) assess the implications of distance education on student eligibility and other requirements for financial assistance under this title, and make recommendations that will enhance access to postsecondary education through distance education while maintaining access, through on-campus instruction at eligible institutions, and program integrity; and (5) make recommendations to the Secretary regarding redundant or outdated provisions of and regulations under this Act, consistent with the Secretary's requirements under section 498B.

(k) TERM OF THE COMMITTEE.--Notwithstanding the sunset and charter provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. I) or any other statute or regulation, the Advisory Committee shall be authorized until October 1, 2004.