transformative change

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Lessons from TAACCCT Round One Consortia:
The Community College Transformative Change Initiative (TCI)

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AT ILLINOIS

MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

The Transformation Agenda (MCCWDTA) brings together all 15 Massachusetts' community colleges; the Commonwealth's higher education, economic development, adult basic education (ABE), and workforce development systems; and industry stakeholders to transform the delivery of education and training programs. The initiative has dual goals to achieve structural, systemic change of education that results in a more integrated system that provides efficient career pathways and assists students' attainment of certificates, degrees and jobs. Through accelerated programs linked closely to industry need, the Transformation Agenda is building a systems approach to enable greater economic opportunities for Massachusetts residents.

MCCWDTA is developing career pathways in three priority economic development areas targeted by the Commonwealth: Health Care, Life Sciences and Biotechnology, and Information Technology. Secondary regional sectors include Clean Energy, Financial Services and Entrepreneurship, and Advanced Manufacturing.

MCCWDTA is implementing four key strategies to accomplish their goals. They include:

1. Providing navigators, career coaches and achievement coaches

All Massachusetts community colleges are increasing the support services available to students as a central strategy to improve access, retention, and completion. These supports begin with college and career navigators that have been hired by every community college in the state.

Navigators are embedded at the local One-Stop Career Center to help career center customers identify and pursue community college credentials. Support services are also being expanded on every campus, where they take the form of achievement coaches who work with students who may be struggling in the classroom, and/or career coaches who help students identify and pursue the certificate or degree pathway that will lead them to their career goals.

According to MCCWDTA officials, early evidence indicates that the navigators have led to an increase in One-Stop Career Center customers attending community colleges. In addition, colleges report anecdotal impact of the achievement and career coaches in increased retention and completions among students at higher risk for success. Data available August 2013 show that of the 14,425 credits attempted, 11,760 were completed, an 83% completion rate.

Additional results of the navigators include stronger relationships between community colleges and the state's Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and One-Stop Career Centers, which demonstrate an example of leveraging resources.

MCCWDTA COLLEGES

Quinsigamond Community College (lead college)

Berkshire Community College

Bristol Community College

Bunker Hill Community College

Cape Cod Community College

Greenfield Community College

Holyoke Community College

Massachusetts Bay Community College

Massaoit Community College

Middlesex Community College

Mt. Wachusett Community College

North Shore Community College

Northern Essex Community College

Roxbury Community College

Springfield Technical Community College

2. Redesigning developmental education

All 15 MCCWDTA colleges are eliminating the barriers to college experienced by people with basic math and literacy needs. College faculty and adult basic education (ABE) instructors from across the state worked with industry partners to develop contextualized curriculum modules aligned to the three industries.

The curriculum is in use at 11 of 15 campuses, as another means of accelerating the learning process for students working toward community college credentials and careers. In addition, all colleges are implementing acceleration strategies for developmental education that include boot camps, self-paced learning labs, co-enrollment in developmental and college-level courses, and/or embedded remediation into course content. Anecdotal evidence suggests a higher rate of matriculation from developmental education to college-level courses, which will be examined by evaluation data available fall 2013.

3. Reshaping certificate and degree programs

All 15 community colleges are reshaping certificate and degree programs to accelerate learning and completion and to ensure alignment with industry needs. To date, 101 programs have been redesigned as focused, more efficient pathways leading from developmental programs to certificates and degrees.

These programs, developed in concert with industry partners, are designed to accelerate student progress through strategies that include condensed, 8-week terms, stackable credentials, and articulation from non-credit to credit-bearing courses. Many programs have internship or on-the-job training components. To date, 2,355 students have enrolled out of a projected 5,293 targeted for enrollment over the 3-year grant period.

4. Utilizing technology

The Consortium is expanding its use of technology in a variety of ways to improve program offerings and the ability of graduates to obtain jobs in high-demand fields. First, all community colleges, public colleges, Department of Higher Education, One-Stop Career Centers and state agencies are utilizing real-time labor market data available through Help Wanted OnLine Analytics, in order to develop workforce development priorities and industry-informed curricula. In addition, several colleges are delivering online or hybrid content, and the eight colleges with advanced manufacturing programs have begun working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to develop technology-enabled components to enhance and expand access to advanced manufacturing training across the state. Lastly, the Consortium is exploring the development of technology-enabled career coaching and job placement tools that can be used across the community college system and at all One-Stop Career Centers. The envisioned technology would serve as an assessment, planning and tracking tool for students and be linked to real-time labor market data so that career decisions and job search efforts are rooted in knowledge of labor market opportunities.

Scaling Plan

Building on the cross-system collaboration in the state between the community

"Our TAACCCT colleges and partners are developing a more successful delivery of accelerated training with intensive student supports to build the skilled workforce needed to grow the Massachusetts economy. The collaborative nature of all that we do has built commitment to our shared systems, through strategies that include college and career navigators, contextualized developmental education, and accelerated programs. This Transformation Agenda has enabled our colleges and local workforce partners, to build the capacity needed to help more students overcome barriers to college, and to meet the needs of industry partners in each region of the state."

Dale Allen, Program Director, MCCWDTA, & Vice President for Community Engagement, Quinsigamond Community College

colleges, One-Stop Career Centers and WIBs, and the corresponding state agencies, MCCWDTA seeks to develop shared mechanisms and practices to assist students with career planning, coaching, and placement. Colleges recognize that for students to effectively embark on career pathways that lead efficiently to college credentials and jobs, they must

revamp their approach to advising by applying electronic advising systems and data analytics to closely monitor students' course-taking plans and behavior, track progress toward critical benchmarks, provide frequent feedback directly to students, and signal appropriate interventions before students fall behind or veer off course. Partners in the One Stop Career Centers are also seeking to revamp the approach they are taking to career planning and placement. Together, they are working to develop a more efficient, technology-enabled approach to delivering coordinated services and direct support among the colleges and the One Stop Career Centers.

MCCWDTA has significant experience in attacking this issue from the perspective of the deliverer of services. Some colleges and One-Stop Career Centers have implemented some aspect of this vision in a way that meets the local needs. This entrepreneurial approach is present in numerous locations and is being channeled into the larger approach. Developing a platform that can integrate with existing data systems, and not build a new super-system, has significant financial and human capital savings, buy-in from the

front-line users, and large-scale ramifications for replication.

The Consortium recognizes it will need additional talent, knowledge, and technical skill to scale its vision. One need is to develop an interface, or platform, driven by the student with integrated access to appropriate data within the varied systems. To make this vision a reality, MCCWDTA is actively seeking collaborators in other states, among national organizations and foundations, from colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and from the state's technology firms. The Consortium is also broadening its engagement with national organizations that aspire to a similar vision and have some technological capacity.

The resources to support this endeavor come from current TAACCCT funding as part of capacity building and from the engagement of partners. Also, each state agency that will be serving students at a higher level with this innovation will be asked to allocate resources to the ongoing maintenance of this product. Additional resources will be sought from foundations and other firms that have an interest in developing this technology-enabled solution.

Three data sets will be analyzed to develop the technology-enabled, coordinated career planning and placement system. These include user profiles in the One-Stop Career Centers' MOSES system and student data from the Higher Education Institutional Research System (HEIRS). These will help develop a profile of the new system's users, which will inform the nature of the system developed. The Consortium also intends to gather data on utilization and participant outcomes from the technologies that are currently in use. These disparate systems comprise portions of the full system that will eventually be developed.

Once a system is designed, it will be piloted at several locations throughout the state. Data from the pilot will be collected, including qualitative analysis of the user experience from the perspective of job seekers and staff as well as quantitative data on outcomes for users, including but not limited to job placement data. Those data will be analyzed to make improvements to the system prior to replication at the One Stop Career Centers and community colleges across the state.

For more information about MCCWDTA, contact:
Dale Allen
Program Director, MCCWDTA, & Vice President for Community Engagement
Quinsigamond Community College
508-854-2733
dallen@qcc.mass.edu

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To view the other CCTCI consortia profiles, please visit occrl.Illinois.edu.

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