The Status of Tech Prep Consortia in Illinois: Summary Results for the FY ’01 Final Tech Prep Reports

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tech Prep consortia in Illinois complete the Final Tech Prep Report on an annual basis to describe major accomplishments, barriers, technical assistance needs, and other important aspects of Tech Prep implementation. Beginning in 1999, the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) began working with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to prepare an annual summary document synthesizing the Final Tech Prep Reports for the state. It presents findings for 41 Tech Prep consortia in Illinois for fiscal year 2000-01 (FY ’01), including results from a separate report for each Chicago consortium. Specifically, information presented in this document gives a comprehensive picture of Tech Prep implementation throughout the state through a compilation and synthesis of local consortium reports. Results are categorized according to the following major areas:

- Student participation
- Program elements
- Staff involvement (including professional development)
- Curriculum reform
- Business partner involvement
- Barriers
- Major accomplishments regarding the essential elements
- Major accomplishments in the Tech Prep consortium
- Technical assistance needs

Summarized below are findings pertaining to FY ’01 Tech Prep implementation in the state of Illinois, both on a statewide and local consortium basis:

- **The number of Tech Prep programs held steady.** A total of 927 Tech Prep programs were offered in secondary schools in the state during FY ’01, with an average of 24 programs and a median of 18 programs per consortium. The mean and median for FY ’01 were comparable to the previous fiscal year’s results.

- **Slight increase was seen in secondary schools receiving Tech Prep funds.** Forty of forty-one local consortia reported collectively that 557 secondary schools received Tech Prep funds, and this number is slightly greater than the number reported for FY ’00. On average, each local consortium had almost 14 secondary schools receiving Tech Prep funds; 13 of these schools reported Tech Prep students in ISIS.

- **The number of Tech Prep students and secondary Tech Prep graduates increased slightly over the past few years.** Looking at all Tech Prep consortia outside of Chicago, the total Tech Prep students and Tech Prep graduates increased over the past two fiscal years. The increase is reflected in the total enrollment figure, mean, and median, with an increase in statewide Tech Prep student enrollment from almost 52,000 in FY ’00 to over 58,000 in FY ’01. Moreover, there were about 3,500 more Tech Prep graduates in FY ’01 than FY ’00. Unfortunately, reliable student enrollment statistics were not available for the Chicago region because of discrepancies between the two Chicago consortium reports.

- **Fewer secondary Tech Prep students were thought to transition to postsecondary Tech Prep in FY ’01 than the previous year, though the remediation rate was**
estimated to decline and retention from first to secondary year of college remained high. In FY '01 a total of 2,666 Tech Prep students had enrolled at the postsecondary level after having finished a sequence of Tech Prep courses at the high school level during the preceding year. (This estimate is down from an estimate of 3,500 in FY '00.) A median estimate of 52 students were enrolled in Tech Prep in secondary school and later enrolled in Tech Prep in a local consortium community college, down from an estimate of 65 students in FY '00. An estimated median of 20 first-year students (almost 40%) took remedial course work during FY '01, showing a slight decrease from FY '00. Another encouraging finding is that consortium coordinators estimated over 50% of postsecondary Tech Prep students were retained from the freshman to the sophomore year.

- Widespread use of articulated curricula was reported across the state. About 77% of consortia offered 11 or more articulated Tech Prep sequences at the community college level. Over 40% of consortia provided between 11 and 20 articulated sequences, with 36% offering 21 or more.

- All consortia reported postsecondary Tech Prep programs provided work-based learning, with a mean of 17.5 programs per consortium. The most common type of WBL available to Tech Prep students was unpaid internships/clinical experiences, and this finding is consistent across years (97% in FY '99, 89% in FY '00, and 92% FY '01). A decline was noted in WBL from FY '99 to FY '00 and FY '01 in community/service learning and apprenticeships, whereas other types of WBL remained fairly stable for the past three years.

- High school faculty accounted for the largest share of involvement in professional development (54%), showing a 4% increase from FY '00 to FY '01. High school personnel (administrators, faculty, and counselors) accounted for more than two-thirds of total personnel involvement in professional development activities, while college personnel comprised about 15% of total involvement. Secondary and postsecondary levels combined, involvement in Tech Prep professional development was about 60% faculty, 25% administrators, and 13% counselors.

- Secondary academic and vocational-technical teachers showed a comparable level of involvement in Tech Prep. At the secondary level, a similar level of participation is observed of academic and vocational-technical teachers in staff development, curriculum reform, and other similar activities. On the postsecondary level, vocational-technical instructors are much more likely to be participating in staff development and curriculum development activities than their academic counterparts.

- Secondary schools implemented curriculum reform more vigorously than community colleges. In all categories of curriculum reform, secondary exceeded postsecondary with the exception of “supplementing existing vocational-technical courses with academic content”, and this strategy took place in both secondary and postsecondary schools at virtually the same rate in FY '00. Further, in FY '01 more than 10% more secondary schools reported adding applied curriculum to existing curriculum and providing interdisciplinary courses combining vocational-technical and academic content than FY '01. At the
postsecondary level, supplementing vocational-technical curriculum with academic content was used by 94% of colleges, and supplementing existing academic courses with vocational-technical content increased about 10% from the previous year.

- Business and labor involvement showed a steady increase. The average and median number of business partners who provided AIP/VIP placement for teachers and the number of AIP/VIP placements remained relatively steady over the past few years, though a significant drop was seen in AIP/VIP placements from FY '99 to FY '00 where the AIP/VIP placements leveled off.

- Eight barriers were rated as having a major or very major impact by more than 20% of consortia. Specifically, 46% of consortia indicated *little time designated for joint planning by academic and vocational or secondary and postsecondary faculty* and 41% of consortia rated *too much paperwork associated with the administration of Tech Prep and lack of substitute teachers to fill in for regular teachers during professional development activities* as having a major or very major impact. Significant differences were found in two barriers between FY '00 and FY '01: *Conflict, overlap or gaps between Tech Prep and Education-To-Career* decreased whereas the barrier dealing with *lack of financial resources for Tech Prep* increased in importance.

- Three primary areas of accomplishment were in professional development, articulation, and curriculum development. Articulation emerged as one of the top three areas of accomplishment in FY '01 from a slightly lower priority during the previous year. Professional development, the top area of accomplishment, encompassed the efforts of consortia to invest in personnel, including local inservice workshops and participation in the *Tech Prep Connections Conference*.

- Technical assistance was most needed in the areas of marketing and personnel. Four areas of need were mentioned with respect to marketing: (1) prepare better marketing plans/activities, (2) conduct a statewide effort to inspire student and parent interest, (3) obtain endorsement by the governor, ISBE, ROE’s for parent organizations and school districts, and (4) assist in getting business and administrators involved. Regarding personnel, providing more training, decreased paperwork, and insufficient clerical support were of greatest concern.
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