



## Debra Bragg Talks with U.S. Department of Education's Mark Mitsui

Mark Mitsui is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Community Colleges in the United States Department of Education, and his interviewer, Debra Bragg, is the Gutsell Endowed Professor and founding director of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL). They sat down for an interview on February 18, 2015, in Baltimore, Maryland.



The full interview, *The Importance of Linking Policy Intent to Policy Outcome: An Interview with Mark Mitsui*, is available in our most recent issue of **UPDATE on Research and Leadership**.

Two short podcasts are also available for download:

- [Transformative Change Initiative: Mark Mitsui on the Importance of Faculty Engagement](#)
- [Transformative Change Initiative: Mark Mitsui on Scaling Innovations](#)

**Strategies for Transformative Change**  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP

**BUILDING A COMMON FOUNDATIONAL CURRICULUM WITH STACKABLE CREDENTIALS**

**Transformative Change Initiative Overview**  
The Transformative Change Initiative (TCI) is designed to advance community colleges to leadership positions that improve student success and program, organizational, and career performance.

**Transformative Change Definition**  
TCI defines Transformative Change as follows: Raising the individual, organizational and system performance of community colleges to exceptional levels without sacrificing their historic commitment to access and equity.

**Building a Common Foundational Curriculum with Stackable Credentials**  
The Arizona Sun Corridor - Get Into Energy Consortium (ASC-GIEC) is comprised of five community colleges in the region working to strengthen and broaden the region's talent pipeline for the energy industry. Everett Community College, Northland Pioneer College, Pima Community College and Yavapai College. As a result of a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training program, the ASC-GIEC uses a variety of strategies to provide training with stackable industry-specific credentials that articulate seamlessly to related education/training programs.

**The CC Competency Model:** The centerpiece of the ASC-GIEC consortium activities is the industry-validated Get Into Energy (GIE) Competency Model that delineates basic competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) along with industry-specific fundamentals and technical competencies for programs of study in mining and energy across the consortium. The region's stackable credential model was adapted from the Center for Energy Workforce Development, and industry input was given to identify essential skills. Students have opportunities to earn multiple credentials, commencing with several entry and entry points on the way to the AAS degree. (A visual of the model appears on the back of this brief.)

The model includes a common foundational curriculum of two courses, Career and Personal Development (CPD) and Energy Industry Fundamentals (EIF) which include required competencies for all students enrolled in a GIE program at any of the five colleges in the consortium. These two classes can be taken concurrently and can typically be completed by a student in just one semester.

The CPD course focuses on the skills identified in Item one through three of the Competency Model, which focuses on personal effectiveness skills, basic academic requirements and workplace requirements. In this portion of their training, students have an opportunity to develop a professional resume, participate in mock interviewing and test for either the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and the SkillsUSA Employability Skills Certificate, or the NCRC Plus.

Item four and five of the Competency Model identify industry-specific and industry-related technical skills. Students learn the basics of various generation, transmission and distribution systems, along with safety awareness and industry-related regulations. Upon completion of the course, all eligible students have an opportunity to test for the Energy Industry Fundamentals Certificate.

Upon completion of the CPD and EIF courses, the colleges use industry hiring data to help students select an occupational-specific pathway that culminates in a certificate or degree. Students can complete this occupational-specific training in the classroom, and/or during on-the-job training as part of an internship or apprenticeship.

**Major Factors**

- **Committed Employer Engagement:** The strength of the Competency Model is employer engagement in the development process to ensure that the skills taught to students meet the requirements for current and future employment demands in the region. In addition, employers regularly participate in student engagement opportunities, such as orientations, power plant tours and mock interviews. Some employers have modified their hiring practices to benefit ASC-GIEC students, and nearly all partnering employers are providing students and colleges with advance notifications of employment opportunities. This employer commitment validates the program offerings to new and current students seeking a career in the energy industry.
- **Sustainability as a Common Goal:** The consortium has focused on collective efforts on building sustainable programs and pipeline strategies. From the start, the colleges and industry partners knew that in order to make these energy programs sustainable, a process would need to be in place to ensure that demand of the industry. As a result, the consortium developed a supply and demand model, complete with industry hiring projections to allow for the appropriate number of students in each program of study to meet the hiring projects for each occupation. Likewise, the colleges agreed early on to create specialty programs at each college to help avoid outputs of students that surpass the quantified hiring needs of the industry partners.

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## Building a Common Foundational Curriculum with Stackable Credentials

A new brief has been added to TCI's Strategies for Transformative Change series. This series provides summaries of strategies employed in Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants, including evidence of success reported by consortia. The newest brief, *Building a Common Foundational Curriculum with Stackable Credentials*, focuses on the Arizona Sun Corridor-Get Into Energy Consortium (ASC-GIEC), which is a recipient of a round two grant.

The Consortium includes five community colleges and several industry partners across the state of Arizona working to strengthen and broaden the region's talent pipeline for the energy industry. Estrella Mountain Community College is the lead institution accompanied by Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Northland Pioneer College, Pima Community College and Yavapai College.

[Read about the centerpiece of the ASC-GIEC activities, the industry-vetted Get Into Energy \(GIE\) Competency Model.](#)

[Read other briefs in this series.](#)

## Missed our webinar? Get the recording!



On Thursday, May 7, 2015, at 12:00 CST, the Transformative Change Initiative hosted the webinar, "Going Big! How to Scale Innovation for Transformative Change". In this webinar we talked with Maria Fieth (Consortium for Healthcare Education Online, CHEO) and Leah Woodke (Tribal College Consortium for Developing Montana and North Dakota Workforce, DeMaND) along with members of the TCI research team.

- You can now access a recording of the webinar here: <http://occrll.illinois.edu/files/Projects/CCTCI/TCI-webinar-going-big.mp4> or here: <https://vimeo.com/127753898>
- You can learn more about TCI and download TCI resources here: [http://occrll.illinois.edu/projects/transformative\\_change/](http://occrll.illinois.edu/projects/transformative_change/)
- You can access resource sheets developed by Pueblo Community College's Instructional Design Team here: <http://occrll.illinois.edu/files/Projects/CCTCI/pcc-resources.pdf>



*Change.*

## Keynote Address at the Celebrate Success Conference

On April 29, 2015, in Virginia Beach, Debra Bragg gave the keynote address at the Celebrate Success Conference for the 23 partners in the Virginia RETHINKS Health Sciences Education Consortium. She spoke on *Scaling Innovation: Guiding Principles to Scale Transformative*

[Download the presentation.](#)

[Learn about upcoming TCI and OCCRL events.](#)

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