Our mission is to use research and evaluation methods to improve policies, programs, and practices to enhance community college education and transition to college for diverse learners at the state, national, and international levels.

Director's Note

We're one month into the new year with many of us still hopeful about new beginnings, desiring new experiences, and committed to new goals. Each new year evokes a fresh start. We are pleased that 2016 ushers in a new slate of featured articles that bring attention to important trends and current issues of importance to the community college sector.

Community colleges are an essential mechanism for providing opportunities for students not traditionally nurtured by four–year institutions. Among the multiple postsecondary pathways that community college offer, entrepreneurship programs have become what Paul Magelli refers to as the "Third Pathway." In an interview with Janice Li North, Magelli shares how community colleges are preparing students with business skills and exposing them to entrepreneurial development.

Besides entrepreneurial development, workforce development has remained a high priority for community colleges. Workforce training and development have also been priorities of the Obama administration. In 2010, President Obama authorized $2 billion dollars to fund the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program over four years through signing the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act. Debra Bragg, Matthew Giani, and Heather Fox share findings from the Health Professions Pathways Consortium's efforts to expand and improve healthcare education and employment success in this high growth industry sector.

The health of our nation is dependent on fueling the pipeline to college and degree completion. Kadeem Fuller and I discuss the growing pipeline to prison and how community colleges promote postsecondary educational access behind bars. In addition, community colleges are known for providing other alternative on–ramps to higher learning. In the case of dual credit/dual enrollment programs, they offer an accelerated pathway. Ken Sheffel, President of the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) explains three views on concurrent enrollment — illuminating the local, state, and national context for these initiatives.

Another means of expediting baccalaureate attainment are applied baccalaureate (AB) degree programs. Recent research on the implementation of AB programs across the country is presented by Debra Bragg and Maria Soler Salazar. Rounding out this issue of Update on Research and Leadership, Jason Taylor and Maria Soler Salazar tell us about the Credit When It's Due (CWID) initiative and share initial findings on reverse transfer practices in 15 states.

Welcome to an issue of Update like no other! As you read this edition you will notice fresh perspectives on timely topics plus a fresh new look. We hope you find our new PDF format featuring flip page e–reading engaging as well as lengthier articles that boasts bold colors, graphics, and most importantly content. If you like what’s in this issue, feel free to share via Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. Happy Reading!

Eboni M. Zamani–Gallaher

Eboni M. Zamani–Gallaher
Entrepreneurship Education as a Third Pathway for Community Colleges: An Interview with Paul Magelli
by Janice Li North, OCCRL Graduate Research Assistant

Community colleges are typically known for their CTE and transfer offerings. Alongside these traditional pathways, however, courses, certificates and associate’s degrees in entrepreneurship point the way to a new and innovative kind of education, even a third pathway through community colleges. To explore entrepreneurship education, OCCRL’s Janice Li North interviewed Paul Magelli, Senior Director at the Academy for Entrepreneurship Leadership and Visiting Professor of Economics Emeritus at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Paul Magelli brings an array of practical and educational experience in the field of entrepreneurship. At age 8, Magelli and his twin brother started their first business selling goat milk. Six years later, they joined three elder brothers as partners in Magelli Brothers Super Markets. In 1956 at age 25, Magelli left the business and began his undergraduate studies in economics at the University of Illinois. He completed his PhD at Illinois and also discovered a talent and vocation for education and administration. His past positions include Dean of Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas; Vice President for Academic Administration at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa; and, President of Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado. Magelli is also President Emeritus of Parkland College in Champaign.

Magelli holds a Doctor of Law, honoris causa, from the University of Bristol, UK, where he helped to establish the Bristol Enterprise Centre. In May 2016, he will be awarded an honorary doctorate from Wichita State University for his lifetime achievement and visionary leadership. Paul has served as a Scholar-in-Residence at Kauffman Foundation, advising on the development and implementation of initiatives to advance entrepreneurship training and knowledge in American higher education. He continues to serve on numerous boards of technology-based firms.

The Academy for Entrepreneurship Leadership was established, through the support of the Kauffman Foundation, with the aim of infusing entrepreneurship across the curriculum at the University of Illinois. Could you highlight some of your main initiatives and achievements?

Magelli: We are reaching the conclusion our current implementation plan (2010–2015) so let me focus on initiatives during the first years of the award. Our first objective was faculty development. Entrepreneurship is a relatively new field of study with limited numbers of faculty who hold a PhD in entrepreneurship. This is true not only at the University of Illinois but nationwide. At the same time, however, there was increasing student demand for content, courses, and engagement in entrepreneurship. To develop academic content the Academy identified, through a campus wide competition, faculty in related fields who would bring workplace experiences and/or a research interest in entrepreneurship, innovation, and new firm creation. Funding from the Kauffman Foundation enabled us to recruit highly qualified faculty as Academy Fellows. The fellows developed extensive academic offerings by integrating entrepreneur-concepts into existing courses or by designing new courses. Through the faculty fellowships we built bridges to and between colleges — engineering, business, fine arts, and education, actually all thirteen degree-granting colleges on campus. As a result, the Academy ultimately included nearly 60 fellows across the university.

In a given semester as many as 80 different courses are offered with as many as 8,000 students, graduate and undergraduate enrolled.

The Academy also participates in collaborations and activities such as the Venture Accelerator for student startups, the Entrepreneurworks Incubator located in the University Research Park, Social Fuse networking events, and the Cozad Business Plan competition. And, as a new enterprise itself, the Academy received venture funding from the Kauffman Foundation with the expectation that the University would generate additional financial support to build and sustain these efforts. Groundwork is being laid for a capital campaign as part of the university’s upcoming 150th anniversary, which will define the next stage in the life of the Academy for Entrepreneurship Leadership.

Turning to community colleges, do you see a similar level of activity and interest in entrepreneurship education?

Magelli: Together with Dr. Cindy Kehoe and a team of researchers, we are just completing an exhaustive inventory of entrepreneurship education in higher education around the country including community colleges — again with financial support from the Kauffman Foundation (Magelli & Kehoe 2016). Based on a review of over 1600 community colleges, the research team has determined that there has been an infusion of entrepreneurship into the curriculum, in addition to or alongside the traditional focus on small business management. You might ask, what’s the difference? Small business management entails the know-how to manage a small- or medium-sized business. To this set of skills is added the dimensions of business innovation, new firm creation, business scaling, partnerships, mergers and enterprise growth.

Dimensions of Entrepreneurship

- small-to-medium business management
- partnerships
- business innovation
- business scaling
- mergers
- new firm creation

With that in mind, of 1,6315 community colleges surveyed, 1,132 (70%) offer at least one course in entrepreneurship and/or small business. We also determined that 613 colleges (38%) offer a degree or certificate program in entrepreneurship, which entails a range of courses. Importantly, it appears that community colleges make a clear distinction between small business management and entrepreneurship, which has enabled the research team to make clear distinctions about the state of entrepreneurship education and small business management.

As the former president of a community college, Parkland College, are there particular challenges that community colleges face in building an entrepreneurship program?

Magelli: Historically, community colleges have benefited from internal and external support, the latter especially from the Small Business Administration. Thus, a solid base of qualified instructors is in place to teach small business courses. With regard to entrepreneurship, community colleges face the same challenge the Academy has faced: a limited number of faculty who were prepared and available to teach the entrepreneurial aspects of new firm formation.

1. Degree-granting, accredited two-year colleges (which also included for-profit institutions) as designated by the Carnegie Classification served as the selection criteria for this study.
Entrepreneurship Education As a Third Pathway for Community Colleges

Specifically, increasing demands on shrinking or static budgets also limit the prospects of adding new faculty or retooling faculty to teach new offerings. Like new firm creation, new educational programming requires financial resources, particularly as student interest and demand grow. Faculty fellowships in the Academy aforementioned translated into the time and resources to develop new courses and areas of study. In contrast, faculty at community colleges often have fixed and defined instructional responsibilities, are teaching full-time, and, with limited resources, new program development is a tremendous challenge.

At the community college level, what kind of credentials does an instructor need?

Magelli: An appropriate set of credentials is a mix of business and teaching expertise. A course really benefits from instructors who have had entrepreneurial experience, new firms, been successful, and can enable students to see the myriad steps required to develop an idea into an enterprise. But there is the concern that it stands may have one knowledge base or the other. Ideally they would have both. And this ideal points to a kind of career path for instructors who move back and forth between business and education. Someone might obtain a bachelor’s or an MBA, spend time in a business environment, come back and pursue more graduate studies, possibly obtaining a PhD, which deepens his or her understanding of research, theory, and teaching methods. There are enormous opportunities in the Academy for these individuals as students seek, even insist upon, more pragmatic engagement.

But what “technical” qualifications or certifications does this entail? I think the teaching of entrepreneurship is a nascent field or discipline that is not yet widely recognized within higher education. I think the answer lies in a greater focus on professional development along two pathways: academic training and education for those with business experience, and more business immersion opportunities for college instructors.

I am optimistic about the development of the field. I think it’s an iterative learning process as colleges and universities work out the right professional development models that can foster entrepreneurship educators who combine business experience, academic rigor, and sophistication. Ultimately, I think students will benefit from a teacher who has both done it and can teach it successfully. In a sense, this is not new. We want teachers of science, law, and medicine, for example, to have experience in the laboratory, the courtroom, or the clinic. The challenge is to dedicate financial and institutional resources that will build and empower this kind of career path for instructors who move back and forth between business and education. Someone might insist upon more pragmatic engagement.

Can you speak to examples of successful entrepreneurship in community colleges?

Magelli: In general terms, a solid program begins with an introductory course that provides students with the basic tools and vocabulary concerning opportunity recognition and actualization, competitive intelligence and industry analysis, for instance. Then, there are the traditional courses in finance, economics, accounting, and management that supplement or complement the entrepreneurship pursuit. Additionally, a program will offer a series or a specialization in entrepreneurship, new enterprise investment and financing, or business scaling for example. In all, an entrepreneurship program will have a basic entry point, then do two things: first, it will respond to the students’ interests and directions, and second, it will lead them toward new educational horizons that enhance their individual pathways.

Is there any research on the entrepreneurial pathway that community college students end up taking, based on their education and training?

College ExEMPLers in Entrepreneurial Education Cited by Magelli

- Johnson County Community College (Overland Park, KS) offers a series of basic entrepreneur courses and specialization courses tailored to specific industries or business sectors.
- Montgomery County Community College (Blue Bell, PA) offers an array of credit hour entrepreneurship management certificate that combines a range of courses from business planning and business law to ethical decision making.
- Chabot College (Hayward, CA) offers a range of specialized entrepreneurship programs in music recording, real estate, and family childcare.
- Columbia College (Columbia, MI) takes concepts of entrepreneurship and relates them to specific industries such as culinary arts, automotive technology, or communication technology. Columbia College is also home to the Steven and Barbara Fishman Center for Entrepreneurship (Mr. Fishman is president and chairman of Big Lot; and the Fishmans are both college alumni), which offers mentorship, internships, networking, and seed capital for startups.
- Southern State Community College (Hillsboro, OH) offers an associate’s degree in entrepreneurship infused with courses in speech, ethics, law, leadership and psychology.

Magelli: As researchers, we need to know more about outcomes: enterprises created, future academic paths, and the overall economic impact of entrepreneurship education. Unfortunately, in the absence of significant longitudinal studies, we do not know the aggregate impact. This is a question and issue that begs for more study and research.

However, let me point to a different set of outcomes, or perhaps educational aims. A student who takes an entrepreneurship course or who completes a program may or may not start a new business. What else do they gain from their studies? I would say they gain an understanding of law, of the economy, of public policy; they learn leadership and management skills; they acquire tools or ways of doing analysis; they learn how to develop and complete a successful project. This kind of awareness and ability can translate into a range of successful careers, not just new firm creation. Again, unfortunately, we do not have the type of longitudinal study that would document my assertion.

Do you have any final thoughts on entrepreneurship education and community colleges?

Magelli: At the heart of a flourishing economy is business innovation, new firm creation, and successful ventures. These translate into a healthy mix of wealth creation, job creation, tax revenues, and a citizenry with a stake in the success of the economy and public policy. Community colleges serve as the grassroots educational foundation by meeting student demand and providing them with the kind of entrepreneurial education that will prepare them to play a vital role in these many important aspects of society. This of course calls for administrative leadership and financial investment. But I think the payoff for students and the broader economy are immense.

Alongside wealth creation, another important part of entrepreneurship is wealth distribution to meet the needs of a growing population. In this sense, the entrepreneurial mindset is also one of civic responsibility. I would say that an important dimension to entrepreneurship education, which we see in many corporations, is social responsibility: how to give back. This is more important than innovation or enterprise, it is the attention to the human condition.

Reference


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The Impact of the Health Professions Pathways Consortium

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Heather L. Fox, OCCRL Project Coordinator

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant was launched in 2011 by the United States Department of Labor (DOL), in partnership with the United States Department of Education. The Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign conducted the third-party evaluation of the Health Professions Pathways (H2P) Consortium that was funded with a Round One TAACCCT grant of over $19M. The evaluation had three major components: 1) implementation evaluation, 2) impact evaluation, and 3) performance reporting on behalf of the H2P Consortium to the DOL. This executive summary highlights major results of the H2P Consortium, taking into account programs of study and strategy implementation by the following nine co-grantee colleges:

- Anoka–Ramsay Community College in Coon Rapids, MN
- Ashland Community and Technical College in Ashland, KY
- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College in Cincinnati, OH (H2P Lead)
- El Centro College in Dallas, TX
- Jefferson Community and Technical College in Louisville, KY
- Malcolm X College in Chicago, IL
- Owens Community College in Toledo, OH
- Pine Technical and Community College in Pine City, MN
- Texarkana College in Texarkana, TX

Eight strategies represent the H2P Consortium’s efforts to enact transformative change in healthcare education. Six of these strategies focus on student competency-building and healthcare employment success:

- Recognize skills and knowledge gained by students through enhanced credit for prior learning (CPL) processes designed to accelerate time to completion;
- Provide contextualized and integrated developmental education that improves students’ foundational skills and the likelihood that they will earn a credential;
- Offer healthcare occupations core curriculum that expands access to diverse student populations, raises student awareness of career options, and prepares students for the rigor of healthcare studies;
- Implement incumbent healthcare programs that advance lower-skilled healthcare workers into professional positions;
- Provide intrusive retention and student success services to foster student success in their career pathway; and
- Build industry-recognized stackable credentials and incumbent healthcare programs that align education

The other two strategies demonstrate a larger commitment to transformative change in healthcare education and training in and beyond the H2P Consortium. These strategies include enhanced data and accountability systems, including sustaining and scaling these reforms, and galvanizing a national movement to reform healthcare education. The Consortium works in partnership with major healthcare employers and workforce partners to effect transformative change on a national scale. Through strategic development of networked partnerships, the Consortium is leveraging the national TAACCCT stage to build interest in curriculum reform, most notably scaling the healthcare occupations core curriculum. Please see OCCRL (2015, Third-party Evaluation of Implementation of the Health Professions Pathways Consortium: Nine Co-Grantee College Site Reports) for in-depth description of the implementation of strategies by H2P.

H2P Participation in Programs of Study

Overall, the nine co-grantee colleges that comprised the H2P Consortium served more than 6,500 participants, nearly 5,000 of whom enrolled in one or more of the 41 TAACCCT-funded programs of study. The remaining students participated in one or more of eight strategies specified above. Impacted programs of study include eight very short-term certificate programs (12 or less credits), fourteen short-term certificate programs (more than 12 credits but less than a year), eight long-term certificate programs (one year or greater), and eleven associate degree programs. The reformed and improved programs of study with the highest enrollment were: a) Certified Nursing Assistant, b) Practical Nursing, c) Registered Nursing, d) Medical Assisting, e) Pharmacy Technician, and f) Emergency Medical Technician. The Consortium is leveraging these reforms, and galvanizing a national movement to reform healthcare education. The Consortium works in partnership with major healthcare employers and workforce partners to effect transformative change on a national scale. Through strategic development of networked partnerships, the Consortium is leveraging the national TAACCCT stage to build interest in curriculum reform, most notably scaling the healthcare occupations core curriculum. Please see OCCRL (2015 Third-party Evaluation of Implementation of the Health Professions Pathways Consortium: Nine Co-Grantee College Site Reports) for in-depth description of the implementation of strategies by H2P.

Educational Outcomes

In terms of the educational outcomes of H2P students, our analyses revealed that the majority of H2P participants received educational benefits from participating in a grant-funded program of study, and there is compelling evidence that the reforms that H2P colleges implemented made a positive impact on the attainment rates of healthcare students. Of the 4,888 students who enrolled in a program of study that was created or modified through TAACCCT funds, roughly two-thirds had earned a postsecondary credential or were still enrolled in their H2P co-grantee college as of Fall 2014, and this figure was higher than 90% at one college. More than 1,000 long-term certificates and associate’s degrees were awarded to students, in addition to more than 1,000 short-term and very short-term certificates. Nearly one out of every ten students who earned a credential earned more than one, supporting the assumption that the stackable credential strategy improved credential attainment rates for H2P participants. Additionally, our analyses provide support that H2P increased the likelihood that students enrolled in healthcare programs of study would complete their credentials, particularly in regards to the LVN/LPN programs across colleges. H2P participants in LVN/LPN programs were roughly 18% more likely to earn that credential compared to a retrospective cohort of students in the same programs when using the most rigorous methods available to control for potential differences in background characteristics between the groups.

68% of H2P Participants Earned at Least One Credential or Were Still Enrolled as of Fall 2014

![Figure 2. The number of credentials H2P participants earned, by credential length.](image)
High Impact Strategies
Out of the six student-focused strategies emphasized by the Consortium, four stand out as particularly important in terms of the number of students who participated and the degree of student engagement. These strategies are enhanced retention services, stackable credentials, healthcare occupation core curriculum, and credit for prior learning.

Enhanced Retention Services
Bolstered by the student success/retention coaches hired with grant funds, all co-grantee colleges increased efforts to provide students with intrusive advising and targeted retention services to increase their chances of success.

H2P used a four-pronged approach to enhanced retention services: a) build relationships with community-based organizations and workforce partners, b) provide students career planning services, c) provide proactive advising, and d) provide technology-assisted employment services.

Among three of the colleges that collected particularly detailed data on retention services, 2,221 students received 14,473 individual services, for a total of 9,504 hours of services, or roughly 4.5 hours of services per student who received retention services.

Stackable Credentials
The H2P Consortium selected industry-recognized stackable credentials with the goal of accelerating time to completion and streamlining pathways to the labor market for students (H2P Consortium, 2011).

Eleven sets of stackable credentials, involving 13 new industry-recognized credentials, were developed or enhanced through the H2P grant.

Fifteen percent of all credential earners (356 graduates) earned multiple credentials, and an additional 523 students were continuing their studies after having earned at least one credential.

Credit for Prior Learning
The Consortium selected this strategy as a means to recognize the knowledge and skills gained by displaced and incumbent workers through previous work and life experience (H2P Consortium, 2011).

Across the Consortium, 415 students earned at least some credit for prior learning, for a total of 3,055 credits, averaging about seven credits of credits granted or waived, per student who received any credit for prior learning.

Healthcare Occupation Core Curriculum
A competency-based healthcare occupations core curriculum was implemented to some extent at all nine colleges.

In total, 2,202 students enrolled in one of the 40 healthcare occupation core curriculum courses implemented across the Consortium, for a total of 3,682 student-course enrollments with an overall pass rate of 97.5%.

Given that only El Centro College had a pre-existing healthcare occupations core curriculum, the breadth and depth of implementation of this strategy by the Consortium is noteworthy.

Employment Outcomes
This report also demonstrates that the labor market outcomes of H2P participants improved greatly when comparing their employment and earnings prior to H2P to their labor outcomes at the end of the grant period. Across the Consortium, students gained $1,400–$1,700 in average quarterly earnings (depending on the precise method of calculation). When assessing earnings growth between the quarter immediately preceding when each student enrolled in H2P and final earnings, students gained $1,900–$2,500 in quarterly earnings. Earning a credential of any length was shown to have a beneficial impact on the likelihood that students were employed post-H2P, and the earnings gains for students who completed long-term certificate and associate’s degree programs were particularly pronounced. Students who completed long-term certificates earned roughly $2,500 more quarterly compared to their pre-H2P average and $3,600 more compared to their earnings in the quarter immediately prior to enrollment in H2P. For students who completed associate’s degrees, these gains were $4,000 and $6,000. These results underscore the high labor market value of the majority of credentials awarded to H2P participants.

Our results also support the positive impact that H2P made on the labor market outcomes of healthcare students, although our conclusions are tempered by the fact that the economy was improving over the course of the grant and substantially changed between the time periods of enrollment for the retrospective and H2P groups. Nevertheless, H2P students experienced median earnings gains roughly 60% higher than retrospective students, and they were significantly more likely to be employed at the end of the cohort time period. They also had significantly higher quarterly earnings, even when controlling for a broad range of student characteristics and the specific credentials students earned. Using rigorous quasi-experimental techniques, H2P students had an estimated 8% greater likelihood of employment and 22% higher wages than retrospective students, both significant differences.

Figure 3. The mean quarterly gain in earnings of H2P participants, by credential length.
The United States prides itself on being a world leader in many areas. For instance, the nation is a leader in technology, natural gas production, and wind power. There are many other areas in which the United States is a recognized world leader, including the incarceration of its people. During the last four decades, the United States has experienced a 500% increase in imprisonment (Mauer & King, 2007) and well over two million people are presently incarcerated in jails and prisons around the country (Carson, 2015). When combined with the formerly incarcerated who are under correctional supervision in the form of parole or probation that number increases to 7 million (Riviera, 2015). With 698 people in prison for every 100,000, the United States ranks first in the world, with Rwanda (492 per 100,000) and Russia (446 per 100,000) running a distant second and third in mass incarceration (Walmsley, 2015).

Mass incarceration in this country is costly. One out of every 15 state general fund discretionary dollars is spent on the U.S. criminal justice system with 90% spent on prisons (American Civil Liberties Union, 2016). This is roughly $80 billion a year. In 2013, this translated into nearly $52 billion in state expenditures (National Association of State Budget Officers, 2013). Despite continuing fiscal burdens on states, especially amid the country’s recovery from the Great Recession, prison populations continue to increase rapidly. How did this happen?

The War on Drugs and Mass Incarceration

The “war on drugs” was popularized in 1971 when President Nixon launched a national campaign to combat what he declared to be “public enemy number one.” To understand the connection between the war on drugs and mass incarceration, it is helpful to view the former along multiple axes. First, the war was waged by Republican administrations such as Nixon and Regan, and Democratic presidents including Carter and Clinton, and even dating back to the Johnson administration. Thus, the war on drugs spanned decades and was waged by both political parties.

Second, the war entailed two areas of operation and policy fields, foreign and domestic. Foreign policy introduced to Americas to their Latin American neighbors and domestic. Foreign policy introduced to Americas to their Latin American neighbors through political, military, and paramilitary interventions in Panama, Nicaragua, and Columbia, among others, which were part of a complex engagement with drug trafficking and regional realpolitik. On the domestic side, the war enlisted legislation, law enforcement, the courts, and prisons in order to eradicate drug sales and use within the country. Federal legislation entailed an expanded list of Schedule I controlled substances including crack cocaine, which erected the legal framework for law enforcement; and, it entailed minimum mandatory sentences for drug convictions, which structured court proceedings. State politics and policy followed suit, with the most notable war waged in California, which invoked the baseball adage, “Three strikes and you’re out.” While three-strike laws sprung up in multiple states aimed at violent crime, they were later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2005. In 1994, California passed Proposition 187 (three strikes and you’re out). The multiple axes of the war on drugs combined systematically to criminalize, arrest, convict, and incarcerate individuals at a profound rate. Consequently, prison populations swelled. For example, between 1987 and 2006, the U.S. prison population increased threefold from 585,084 to 1,596,127, reaching its present level of over 2 million. In 2010, the U.S. federal government spent over $15 billion dollars on the War on Drugs accounting for $500 every second (Miron & Waldock, 2010). The questions with any war of course are who won? In any case, was it worth the price? The first question, concerning drug policy, is beyond the scope of this article. Not surprisingly, the answer is highly contested in the United States and internationally. Perhaps our consideration of the second question regarding the price paid for the war on drugs helps to answer the first question—namely, who lost?

Who is Locked Up and Locked Out of Opportunities?

During his remarks at the NAACP convention, President Obama discussed the flaws in the U.S. justice system noting that it “remains particularly skewed by race and by wealth” (Liptak, 2015). He recognized that the interplay between arrests, convictions, and time served with race and income is not anecdotal and is not “barber shop talk” but an empirical fact, supported in evidence.

Research has found a statistically significant race effect on sentencing and imprisonment with African Americans receiving the harshest sentences by race and ethnicity, representing approximately half of those in jail (Bobo & Johnson, 2004; Mauer & King, 2007; Mitchell, 2005). There is a racialized criminal profiling of males of color that corresponds with disproportionate sentencing and imprisonment (Mauer & Huling, 1995; Welch, 2007). Case in point, from 1980 to 2000 the rate of African American incarceration tripled, making the ratio of incarceration between Blacks and Whites 8 to 1 (Blumstein, 2001). There is a disproportionately higher number of individuals from low-income, racially, and/or ethnically underserved backgrounds overrepresented in prisons, many of which have low levels of educational attainment (Coley & Barton, 2006). When considering American incarceration by race/ethnicity and gender, males are incarcerated in larger numbers than females and people of color at higher rates than their white counterparts (Alexander, 2010; Blumstein, 2001; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004). While African Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population, 1 out of 6 African American males are incarcerated. Latinos account for 17% of the population, with 1 out of 36 Latino men incarcerated. In contrast, Whites make up 77% of the population, with 1 out of 106 White men incarcerated (Kerby, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Not surprisingly, education levels correspond with levels of incarceration. According to Pew Charitable Trusts (2010), when considering incarceration by educational attainment, 1 in 3 black men, 1 in 14 Hispanic men, and 1 in 8 White men between the ages of 20 and 34 who are without a high school diploma or GED are incarcerated. In all, 40% of state and federal inmates do not hold a high school diploma or GED — double the national rate (Tolbert, 2012). Moreover, less than 25% have any form of postsecondary education (Contardo & Tolbert 2008).

Percent of Populations Who Are Incarcerated and Are Not Incarcerated by Race and Gender.

(Data Source: Carson, 2015 & U.S. Census Bureau, 2015)
The price of mass incarceration vis-à-vis the war on drugs, gangs, poverty, and racial profiling, among other factors, is paid disproportionately by generations of males of color. If the solution to war on drugs was mass incarceration, the latter begets its own set of problems that rise to the level of public enemies. For example, 95% of all inmates who come to prison have already been punished once or twice (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004). The outcomes are predictable and interconnected — on the one hand, few educational or employment opportunities and recidivism on the other. A Pew Center study found that 4 in 10 prisoners committed new crimes or violated the terms of their release, and were incarcerated again (The Pew Center on the States, 2011). There is less spent on education than incarceration (American Civil Liberties Union, 2016; Kearney, Harris, Jácome, & Parker, 2014). Mass incarceration is a phenomenon that once created, expands and regenerates itself. What is to be done?

Building a New Pipeline: Prison to School to Society

“He who opens a school door, closes a prison.” — Victor Hugo

The history of American prison education, is a study in the central tension between punishment and rehabilitation. The Penitentiary Act of 1799, for example, combined solitary confinement with labor and religious instruction. In the early 1800s (alongside capital punishment), the Quakers advocated for the humane treatment and the moral uplifting of prisoners. Later in the 19th and early 20th centuries, model prisons in New York, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere instituted systems of education as well as democratic participation for inmates. For example, Zebulon Brockway instituted a system of academic and vocational education, sports, and military discipline at Elmira Reformatory in New York State.

The 1950s saw a return to reform in which even the term “prison” was replaced by “correctional institution,” and education mapped coincides with growing emphasis on behaviorism and psychoanalytic therapy. Present-day prison education can trace its origins to the 1970s, in the same period interestingly, as the commencement of the war on drugs.

The Pell Grant Program, enacted in 1972 as the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, sought to offer students with financial need grants that would provide modest college aid. Among those eligible for Pell grants were incarcerated recipients. Prior to 1994, college programs were offered to inmates and did not adversely affect Pell grants available for other students demonstrating financial need grants that would provide modest college aid. Among those eligible for Pell grants were incarcerated recipients. Prior to 1994, college programs were offered to inmates and did not adversely affect Pell grants available for other students demonstrating financial need. The Pell Grant Program, enacted in 1972 as the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, sought to offer students with financial need grants that would provide modest college aid. Among those eligible for Pell grants were incarcerated recipients. Prior to 1994, college programs were offered to inmates and did not adversely affect Pell grants available for other students demonstrating financial need.

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The 1950s saw a return to reform in which even the term “prison” was replaced by “correctional institution,” and education mapped coincides with growing emphasis on behaviorism and psychoanalytic therapy. Present-day prison education can trace its origins to the 1970s, in the same period interestingly, as the commencement of the war on drugs.

The Pell Grant Program, enacted in 1972 as the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, sought to offer students with financial need grants that would provide modest college aid. Among those eligible for Pell grants were incarcerated recipients. Prior to 1994, college programs were offered to inmates and did not adversely affect Pell grants available for other students demonstrating financial need grants that would provide modest college aid. Among those eligible for Pell grants were incarcerated recipients. Prior to 1994, college programs were offered to inmates and did not adversely affect Pell grants available for other students demonstrating financial need.

On the federal level, the Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) houses the government’s education efforts in juvenile justice confinement facilities, as well as many detention centers, jails and prisons, with the aim of rehabilitating correctional populations. In addition, the Second Chance Act (2013) established the program titled “Promoting Reentry Success through Continuity of Educational Opportunities” (PRSECO), administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, which included a one-time discretionary grant opportunity totaling $924,036. Through the program, adult education providers in Kansas, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin were awarded grants to develop correctional education and workforce training programming geared to ease inmate transition post-incarceration utilizing the U.S. Department of Education’s Reentry Education Model for the betterment of low-skill individuals in corrections (Tolbert, 2012).

Various local and state prisons have provided education programs through other avenues of federal support. For example, the Office of Correctional Education (OCE) was created in 1991 by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act to improve coordination and support for correctional education. The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) houses the OCE (U.S. Department of Education 2015). Much of the education of inmates beyond the high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) level is geared to provide skills that can serve as a foundation to reintegrate individuals, post-incarceration, and to help them acquire the requisite skills — life, academic, and vocational — necessary for a successful transition from prison.
The Vital Role of Community Colleges

Many of the postsecondary prison programs are delivered by community colleges (Mecer, 2009). Community colleges are an attractive option for postsecondary prison education because of their affordability. By comparison, in the broader educational landscape, in 2015 the average tuition and fees for public in-district community colleges was $3,347 compared to $9,139 at public four-year counterparts (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015). Community colleges are also a viable option for educational prison programming due to their open door policies and locale. Community colleges are often located in rural areas where prisons are also built. The close proximity between state and federal prisons and community colleges translates into ease of access for the educators delivering instruction. The Obama Administration’s announcement that Pell grants are returning to incarcerated students for a pilot program shows a return to recognizing correctional education as a public good and an important part of individual rehabilitation. Over the past decade, the number of course offerings delivered by community colleges or technical schools in academic and vocational/career technical education programs have been reduced or eliminated across 20 states (Davis et al., 2014). The State of Illinois is one of the states where there has been erosion in academic and vocational prison programs (Erickson, 2011). At the same time that postsecondary correctional education programs are declining, the Illinois prison population has grown; community colleges are poised to aid prison systems on a much larger scale, increasing the enrollment of postsecondary incarcerated students and subsequently contributing to the overall college completion agenda (The John Howard Association of Illinois, n.d.).

Concluding Thoughts

In the era of mass incarceration, the question of prison education as a public and private good is a timely one. From our standpoint, community colleges are positioned to play a vital role in fashioning pathways to postsecondary education and creating futures. In closing, we hope this essay serves to provoke thought on the complex landscape of incarceration and the potential of community college research and practice to advance educational policy and social justice for a discounted population of learners.

References


Postsecondary Prison Education in Practice

RCC Correctional Education Programs

Richland Community College (RCC) contracts with the Illinois Department of Corrections to provide postsecondary correctional education. RCC postsecondary education programs are housed across several correctional facilities and involve full- and part-time college faculty and staff. General studies courses are offered as well as occupational, career development, in addition to college-level coursework for inmates. Education Justice Project (EJP)

One example of the next educational stepping stone is the Education Justice Project (EJP) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which was established in 2006. Hile community colleges provide prison correctional education program for the adult basic education, GED, occupational and general education courses, UIUC provides upper-level college courses and educational workshops for inmates at Danville Correctional Center, a medium–security state prison, 30 miles east of the university campus. Students of EJP typically enter by way of Danville Community College, which also offers onsite courses and degree attainment. Their credits are articulated so that students who have a minimum of 60 hours of college credit are eligible to enroll in EJP courses. On the financial side, EJP is funded through grants, donations, as well as university support and delivers programming at Danville with UIUC volunteer professors, graduate students, and members of the community. Similar efforts groups such as the Vera Institute of Justice and the Bard Prison Initiative endeavor to promote prison programming that curbs recidivism and contributes to the development of inmates to successfully transition after release.

Where Things Stand Now

Returning to the basic tension between punishment and rehabilitation, the pendulum seems to be swinging in the latter direction. There has been a surge of interest in recent years about how to equip our nation’s incarcerated with the skills. There has been a surge of interest in recent years about how to equip our nation’s incarcerated with the skills
Three Views on Concurrent Enrollment
by Kent Scheffel, Vice President of Enrollment Services at Lewis and Clark Community College

In this article, I would like to draw together three policy and practitioner vantage points on concurrent enrollment: national, state, and local. To do this I would like to take up questions of quality, program accreditation, and educational policy, among others, by changing hats throughout based on my roles in the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), Lewis and Clark Community College, and Illinois Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (ILACEP). My hope is to provide a view of central concerns about concurrent enrollment from different vantage points. In some cases the three perspectives will align. But this isn’t always the case and I hope to highlight these as well.

NACEP: A National View

I would like to begin at the national level, and in particular NACEP accreditation of concurrent enrollment programs. NACEP began as a conversation among educators at the American Association of Higher Education conference, held at Syracuse University in 1997. Two year later, 20 founding institutions officially established the organization in order to help ensure the quality of college classes offered to high school students through concurrent enrollment partnerships.

NACEP has reached several milestones since its establishment in 1999. In 2002, NACEP adopted national standards for concurrent enrollment programs. Two years later in 2004 the first four programs successfully earned accreditation after documenting to a peer review team that their programs had implemented the standards. Interest in the accreditation process has grown over the past decade as institutions and states seek to raise the caliber and stature of their programs. As of the 2015–2016 school year, 97 concurrent enrollment programs around the country hold NACEP accreditation: 59 two–year public colleges, 29 four–year public universities, and 9 four–year private colleges and universities. The most important question for concurrent enrollment courses is quality. Courses that are truly college–level both produce positive learning outcomes for students, and assure colleges and universities of that value of course credits.

Kent Scheffel

Kent Scheffel offers a unique combination of expertise on dual credit, and more generally, concurrent enrollment. Kent is currently president of enrollment services at Lewis and Clark Community College, where he oversees one of the largest dual credit programs in Illinois. The program extends to eighteen high schools in his college district, and is currently the only National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) accredited program in the state. In addition, Kent is currently serving a two–year term as president of NACEP. Finally, in the past year Kent has taken an active role in establishing an Illinois state chapter of NACEP, also known as the Illinois Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships.


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Concurrent enrollment courses also have the ability to respond to local, state, and regional needs in a distinctive manner, even beyond other accelerated high school learning. For example, if community leaders and elected officials in a metropolitan area begin an economic development initiative related to the technology industry, concurrent enrollment courses can be designed and offered to students to help them learn the technical skills and be ready for a certificate or degree program to meet employment needs and opportunities. Concurrent enrollment courses are also readily adapted to new programs and fields at the four-year college level as well. For example, new transfer agreements are being developed to include new Restoration Ecology and Computer Networking courses.

Most colleges and universities are continually looking for new programs and strategies to prepare and enroll top students, and to see them through to certificate or degree attainment. Importantly, research by the National Student Clearinghouse shows that students who take concurrent enrollment courses are at least 10% more likely to complete a degree. In all, concurrent enrollment is an effective cost-saving program that can be a win for students, high schools, and colleges.

With that said, I want to change hats and speak from the standpoint of Lewis and Clark Community College, which is NACEP accredited. While this is partly a way to emphasize the benefits of accreditation at the college district level, I want to paint a realistic picture of the challenges in offering an accredited concurrent enrollment, or dual credit in Illinois, benefits as well as the challenges in offering an academic program within Lewis and Clark that were nationally accredited. In short, because national accreditation was the standard for other college programs, and because the standards translate into quality assurance, it was essential to elevate our dual credit program to the same academic level.

What we found is that NACEP accreditation provided the blueprint for course standards as well as program operation and management. We also saw the value in offering a program that was recognized in the same manner as other academic programs within Lewis and Clark. The college regularly attends school board meetings in order to report on student data, credit hours earned, and tuition savings. Importantly, accreditation also serves as quality assurance for parents who are unfamiliar with concurrent enrollment or accelerated learning.

The good news is that we do have the ability to promote success for students in dual credit courses, and to know when they do succeed. For example, our college math department provides common exams for sections of the course.
of math offered on-campus and at high schools. The exams provide the math department with the assurance that high school students are graded on the same course content and performing in the same manner as their traditional college student counterparts. Our English dual credit goes one step further. The college coordinator actually gathers the same writing assignments from high school and college students, and they are blindly distributed among high school and college instructors to achieve consistency in grading. And quite often the high school students have better overall outcomes than on-campus students.

One final note from the Lewis and Clark standpoint. An ongoing challenge will be the retirement of many qualified instructors who are being replaced by teachers who do not have the necessary credentials to teach concurrent enrollment courses. Many school districts are seeking teachers with a bachelor’s degree and limited experience as a result of budget constraints. While the moves aid the districts in budgeting, a reduction in teachers with a master’s degree and academic credentials required by NACEP (and state) standards will result in fewer concurrent enrollment courses for students.

National Goals

Returning to the national level and looking ahead, NACEP has three overarching goals. First, we will enhance our membership services at all levels, in part through the creation of a new position, Director of Accreditation and Member Services. Our goal is partly a response to institutional member calls for additional publications and electronic resources, as well as the increased demand for services through the formation of state and regional chapters. We will also increase our connection with and support of high school district and state agency members, through new networking opportunities and the development of new resources. And overall, we hope to increase membership and accreditation, especially given the extensive national landscape of concurrent enrollment programs and the importance of quality and support.

Second, NACEP, through our Accreditation Commission, is embarking on our periodic review of standards. The accreditation standards were originally adopted in 2002, and revised in 2009. At our national conference in Denver, in October, preliminary information was gathered from attendees. Internal discussions regarding the standards are continuing, and the concerns of regional accrediting bodies and various state standards will be reviewed prior to adopting any changes.

Third, we are strengthening the role of NACEP, nationwide, as a central voice and organizer for concurrent enrollment professionals, conduct professional meetings of concurrent enrollment policy and practice. For example, NACEP is currently leading discussions regarding the state policy questions.

Let me conclude by speaking to the Illinois effort, known as the Illinois Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (ILACEP), which, as I noted, is still under development. While Illinois dual credit programs periodically connected at statewide conferences or at meetings convened by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), there has not been a regular forum for these programs to gather to share resources and best practices, or to work collaboratively on a statewide level. For example, dual credit standards and funding in Illinois fall under the administration of ICCB and the Illinois Higher Education Board. A state chapter will allow members to identify common concerns and to engage state agencies in a constructive and strategic way. Our hope is that the state chapter will also amplify the reach of NACEP and its services in areas such as professional development, especially to help high school teachers earn the required credentials to teach a dual credit course. This is one of the biggest challenges faced by Illinois and other states.

I am excited about the future of ILACEP, in part because of the collaborative relationships that it promises to foster. Like other volunteer organizations, it is the members who will realize the success and sustainability of the chapter. There are many people, administrators, coordinators, and faculty, who are committed to the ongoing growth and development of concurrent enrollment. Their belief in its value and their passion for enhancing the technical assistance we provide to statewide initiatives to develop and implement effective policies increases the reach of our work.

Let me conclude by speaking to the Illinois effort, known as the Illinois Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (ILACEP), which, as I noted, is still under development. While Illinois dual credit programs periodically connected at statewide conferences or at meetings convened by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), there has not been a regular forum for these programs to gather to share resources and best practices, or to work collaboratively on a statewide level. For example, dual credit standards and funding in Illinois fall under the administration of ICCB and the Illinois Higher Education Board. A state chapter will allow members to identify common concerns and to engage state agencies in a constructive and strategic way. Our hope is that the...
**New Research on Applied Baccalaureate Degrees: Implementation in Five Regions of the United States**

by Debra D. Bragg, OCCRL founding director
Maria Claudia Soler Salazar, OCCRL Graduate Research Assistant

The Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) was the recipient of a $2.1 million research grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Advanced Technology Education (ATE) program. From August 2010 to October 2015, a team of researchers at OCCRL conducted studies on the implementation and evaluation of Applied Baccalaureate (AB) degree programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields of study across the country. Early work on this project included document review, website analysis, and telephone surveys of NSF ATE center and project grantees, to learn about their integration of AB degree programs at the community college and university levels. This initial research, led by Dr. Julia Panke Makela of the University of Illinois Career Center, produced a report titled, *Investigating Applied Baccalaureate Degree Pathways in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education*. In the original Sharing What Works project and in this study, practitioner-experts identified AB degree programs that would provide optimal insights into AB degree implementation, optimal sites for participatory field research. Thus, from the outset of this study, University of Illinois researchers worked alongside technical experts drawn from NSF-ATE projects and centers from the advisory committee, which fostered active dialogue among site personnel and researchers and contributed to a deeper understanding of the current state and the potential of AB degrees.

Results of this report, along with other papers generated by the NSF–ATE research are available on the OCCRL website. Results of this project are intended to assist postsecondary institutions to implement, enhance, and evaluate AB degree programs. Because college credentials, from certificates to degrees, have growing importance in the United States, knowing how to implement high quality AB degree programs, including knowing when these programs are and are not needed, is important. Partnerships between community college and four-year institutions that involve the articulation of applied associate coursework into AB degrees represents a promising expansion of college access and completion in STEM education, including technician education, but only if these degrees prove to be beneficial to students and employers. Individuals interested in learning more about AB degrees should also consider attending the Community College Baccalaureate Association’s (CCBA) 16th Annual International Conference in Chicago, March 18–20, 2016. A central feature of this year’s conference is the Applied Baccalaureate (AB) Design Lab where participants can attend dedicated sessions that extend from an introduction to AB degree programs, to implementation, to stakeholder analysis, to policy and accreditation, to evaluation and continuous improvement.

**References**


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**Four Categories of Criteria for Promising and Exemplary Technical Education Programs of Study**

- **Program Quality**
  - Demonstrates clear goals, evidence-based, reflective of high expectations, and supportive of career pathways.

- **Educational Significance**
  - Uses state-of-the-art technology, innovative instructional methods, work-based learning, and culturally inclusive curriculum.

- **Evidence of Effectiveness**
  - Demonstrates student academic achievement and outcomes consistent with industry, state, and national standards.

- **Replicability**
  - Uses program and partnership designs that are feasible to implement by other institutions, partnerships, and employers.

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**Five Regional Cases**

- **North Dakota**
  - Bismarck State College’s Bachelors of Applied Science (BAS) in Energy Management

- **Maryland and Delaware**
  - CyberWatch Center and Partners’ AB degrees associated with CyberWatch Center: NSF–ATE Center; Prince George’s Community College’s Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Information Security; University of Maryland–University College’s Bachelor of Science (BS) in Cybersecurity; and Wilmington University’s Bachelor of Science (BS) in Computer and Network Security.

- **Florida**
  - Daytona State College’s Bachelor’s of Science (BS) in Engineering Technology.

- **Ohio**
  - Lakeland Community College, in Lake County, Ohio, and Partners’ AB degrees associated with Lakeland Community College’s Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Biotechnology Science; and, in Cleveland, Ursuline College’s Bachelor’s of Arts (BA) in Biotechnology.

- **Oklahoma**
  - Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology and Partners’ AB degrees associated with Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology’s Bachelor’s of Technology (BT) in Information Technology, Associate of Science (AS), and Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Information Technology; Rose State College’s Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Networking and Cyber Security; and Tulsa Community College’s Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Information Technology.
Reverse Transfer: Taking Stock and Moving Forward

by Jason L. Taylor, Assistant Professor Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, University of Utah
Matt Giani, Research Scientist, Office of Strategy and Policy, University Texas at Austin

Reverse transfer (or reverse credit transfer) is an emerging policy in higher education. Reverse transfer programs are intended for students who transfer from a community college to a university without earning an associate’s degree. College credits earned at the university are then transferred back to the community college where a degree audit is conducted and students are awarded an associate degree if all degree requirements are met. Our research published in early 2015 found that all states, except Alaska, either have a statewide reverse transfer policy or at least one institutional program (Garcia, 2015). We also found that the majority of states with reverse transfer legislation enacted those policies within the past five years (Garcia, 2015). In short, reverse transfer policies are expanding and they will likely continue to proliferate as states and institutions around the country develop new reverse transfer agreements and partnerships. This momentum points to the need and opportunity to take stock of what we are learning about reverse transfer and to consider directions for moving forward. What follows is a summary of select findings from OCCRL’s research on reverse transfer programs in the 15 states funded through Credit When It’s Due (CWID).

Many reverse transfer-eligible transfer students do not complete a bachelor’s degree within four years of transfer

A central problem driving the development of reverse transfer policies is that many community college transfer students who transfer an associate’s degree do not complete their bachelor’s degree. Researchers have documented this phenomenon (Shapiro et al., 2013), and we observed this problem in the CWID states as well. Using a cohort of first-time transfer students in fall 2008, we estimated which students were potentially eligible for reverse transfer and observed their college enrollment and degree completion outcomes four years after transfer. As displayed in Figure 1, the results showed that 48% of students who were potentially eligible for reverse transfer associate’s degrees did not earn a bachelor’s degree within four years of transfer (Taylor, Bishop, Makela, Bragg, & Ruud, 2013). Many of these students had accumulated large numbers of credits, yet they had no degree to show for their efforts.

Reverse transfer policies and practices are evolving and there are many opportunities to optimize and scale reverse transfer in states

The CWID initiative provided states the opportunity to develop and experiment with reverse transfer, including the planning and development needed to bring reverse transfer to scale. In a paper released in early 2015, we described and defined five dimensions of reverse transfer practice and processes; Figure 2 displays and defines these five dimensions (Taylor & Giani, 2015). For each dimension we described ways in which states and institutions were optimizing reverse transfer to expand the number of students that may benefit without reducing the quality or integrity of the associate’s degree. For example, a state might scale reverse transfer by integrating the student consent process into existing transfer admission applications or by investing in technology to automate transcript exchange and degree audit functions. Although simple in theory, these policies require investment of time and resources that should not be overlooked.

Because reverse transfer is a recent policy development, and one that requires adequate time to observe transfer students’ 4-year retention and degree attainment, we are just beginning to learn the policy outcomes. For example, in a recent study using data from Hawaii and Minnesota, which was presented at the 2015 Association for the Study of Higher Education conference in Denver (Taylor & Giani, 2015), our analyses showed that students who received the reverse transfer associate’s degree were more likely to earn a bachelor’s degree within one year of receiving the degree, when compared to other transfer students (see Figure 3). However, in the same paper there was evidence that some reverse transfer associate’s degree recipients (~10%) stopped-out of the university within one year. These results suggest that receiving the reverse transfer degree may influence students differently. These results should be interpreted with caution because more research is needed and more time is needed to monitor reverse transfer recipients’ progress toward the baccalaureate degree.
Reverse transfer has the potential to increase states’ associate’s degree attainment numbers

In general, reverse transfer has the potential to increase states’ associate’s degree attainment numbers, but we know little about the extent of these increases. Many states are still developing and refining their reverse transfer policies and practices in order to maximize the number of associate’s degrees awarded through reverse transfer, but our research suggests that reverse transfer has the potential to help states meet their degree attainment goals (Taylor & Bragg, 2015). Figure 4 displays the number of degrees each state conferred in the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 academic years. Importantly, the associate’s degrees conferred through reverse transfer represent as much as a 17% increase in Hawaii’s annual number of degrees conferred, but most states we studied increased their associate’s degrees. We anticipate these figures will continue to grow as states refine their reverse transfer policies and practices and scale reverse transfer within and between states.

Moving forward with reverse transfer

Existing evidence and practices from the CWID states suggest several ways for states and institutions to proceed with reverse transfer. First, there is tentative evidence that reverse transfer can have a positive effect on the bachelor’s degree attainment rates of transfer students, although additional research is needed to expand the evidence base. This preliminary evidence is critical because it shows that reverse transfer can have a positive influence on transfer students’ bachelor’s degree attainment. Second, although some states have scaled reverse transfer and demonstrated the potential of reverse transfer to make an important contribution to states’ degree attainment goals, there remains great, untapped potential for the expansion and refinement of reverse transfer programs. Third, a number of strategies have emerged as promising practices for the optimization of reverse transfer, including:

- The incorporation of targeted advising to help students understand the benefits of the associate’s degree, how to become eligible for reverse transfer, and what courses to take in order to receive the associate’s degree
- The investment in and integration of technology that can automate electronic transcript exchange and the degree audit process
- The incorporation of targeted advising to help students understand the benefits of the associate’s degree, how to become eligible for reverse transfer, and what courses to take in order to receive the associate’s degree

This article only summarizes what we have learned about reverse transfer, and more research and publications are available on the CWID website.

References


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