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# **Aligning Multiple Missions**

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**Policy Suggestions for the Kentucky  
Community and Technical College System's  
College and Workforce Readiness Group**

**February 2009**



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## Overview

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The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) has endeavored to build on its successes in helping underserved students receive the education and training they need to succeed in both college, the workforce and life. While much has been done, there is recognition that parts of the system could be better aligned to help students access and complete a community college education in Kentucky.

Kentucky was one of six states to participate in the Ford Foundation’s Bridges to Opportunity Initiative. This initiative recognized that many colleges served three distinct missions: developmental education, workforce and skill training, and academic/transfer programs. While these missions provide great value to the student, funding streams and college organizational structure often create inadvertent barriers to helping students maximize their postsecondary success at community and technical colleges. The goal of Bridges was to improve the connection among the developmental, workforce, and academic functions through policy improvement.

Preliminary research and analysis revealed significant commitment from KCTCS in promoting mission integration. Chief among those mission integration efforts has been implementation of Career Pathways at all 16 KCTCS colleges. Other notable KCTCS efforts that have promoted integration include the Virtual Learning Initiative and now—potentially—*Breaking Through*. The KCTCS strategy of implementing Career Pathways provided an important model for mission integration; these efforts have laid the foundation for continued success with integration and have helped to create more tangible understanding of both the opportunities and challenges facing KCTCS.

KCTCS has engaged Jobs for the Future to help the College Workforce Readiness Workgroup find solutions to the internal policy challenges of aligning multiple missions. The workgroup provides a cross-functional perspective on issues and solutions related to college and workforce readiness. Its goal is to provide recommendations related to:

- College and workforce readiness measurement, assessment, and intervention;
- Alignment of KCTCS assessment and placement policy with statewide Developmental Education Task Force recommendations and cutoff scores defined by CPE;
- Consortium agreements among high schools, Area Technology Centers, and colleges for services and programs which will improve student readiness; and
- Curriculum alignment with Kentucky Adult Education.

The College Workforce Readiness Workgroup was initially tasked with suggesting strategies for aligning multiple missions that can be embraced by the Presidents' Leadership Team and be implemented system-wide. The recommendations were to be designed to offer systemic frameworks that facilitate mission integration by connecting instructional programs and services to support student advancement and to address labor market needs. These systemic solutions were to be designed to transform the way colleges do business by instituting policies, procedures, and practices that lead to positive outcomes for all students. Ideally these recommendations would foster true alignment of multiple missions in ways that were strategic, synergistic, sustainable, and scalable.

Following initial discussions, the College Workforce Readiness Workgroup recently created four smaller working groups, each of which has been charged with developing specific recommendations that can be implemented across the entire Kentucky Community and Technical College:

- *Reconstructing Developmental Education;*
- *Student Success and Transitions: Breaking Through* (especially serving low-skilled and/or low-income students, with a special interest in the age 16-24 population);
- *Data Driven Improvements;* and
- *Professional Development.*

For three groups—Student Success and Transitions: *Breaking Through*; Data Driven Improvements; and Professional Development—JFF has been asked to use the lens of mission integration to help frame issues for Kentucky, share promising practices, and provide starting points for improving KCTCS policies. Moreover, strategic alignment means that the briefs for the selected sub-groups often overlap and link to one another as well as to strategies for the Reconstructing of Developmental Education group (which fell outside of this scope of work).

More timely perhaps, in a period of declining resources, improving effectiveness and building efficiencies through integration is the order of the day. Currently, KCTCS is poised to begin a statewide implementation of *Breaking Through*, promote sustainable funding for Career Pathways, and seek specific policy solutions for better integration through the College Workforce Readiness Workgroup. What follows strives to identify high-leverage opportunities that weave together multiple initiatives, address strategic gaps, and create systemic solutions in ways that create pathways of advancement for students and a supply of qualified workers for employers.

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## Data Driven Improvements Sub-Group

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### Sub-Group Charge

- Develop common protocols for tracking student success
- Create a culture of inquiry through identifying and understanding existing data and data sources
- Identify data trends associated with relevant student outcomes
- Use of student data to systematically improve outcomes for targeted populations, including African-American males
- Provide tools and foundation to begin a gap analysis and diagnostic process
- Emerging best practices for success and transitions

### Context

There has been a growing movement within policy and postsecondary communities to use data better to guide practice and policy. In some instances, these efforts have been responses to calls for greater accountability of higher education, but more recently they have reflected the desire to effectively use data for decisions. Given the multiple missions of community colleges, this task becomes incredibly complex, yet it is becoming widely recognized as the keystone for strategic, systemic improvement.

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System currently collects a rich array of data at the system and campus levels. Student outcomes are tracked through PeopleSoft, community and economic development data are collected at the campus level, and each of the 16 KCTCS colleges has participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement. These data are collected and reported to KCTCS. Conversations with campus-level staff revealed that some have questions about how data are used at the system level; there seemed to be a general belief that collecting the data was important, but there was a lack of transparency as to what the uses were. Moreover, there was interest in having conversations to ensure that the right data were being collected to adequately inform data-driven decisions, as well as in developing mechanisms that create feedback loops on data to colleges.

Recent efforts within KCTCS have underscored the importance of integrating external community data more deeply into the decision-making process. With the Career Pathways initiative, KCTCS required campuses to look more closely at community and sectoral data to better understand regional labor market needs. Campuses used these data to map

opportunities and advancement pathways in job sectors of importance to the particular region. These efforts resulted in data informing gaps in capacity for high-need job opportunities that allow campuses to better allocate resources to meet community and student needs. KCTCS has also received several federal grants to address high-need jobs in the labor market. In short, this need to effectively use this sort of data is growing in importance on campus.

In direct response to the Developmental Education Task Force, the Data Driven Improvements subgroup has started exploring how to effectively integrate common assessment and placement policies across the system. Placement policies and cut scores across all 16 campuses are being cross-walked to best determine uniform assessment and placement policies across the system. The hope is that creating common assumptions surrounding the data related to assessment and placement of students will result in more effective placement of students into coursework, lead to a deeper understanding of outcomes, and best address student success.

While PeopleSoft is effectively used to track students in credit-bearing coursework across all sixteen colleges, colleges often use different data systems for non-credit and community and economic development programs. It was reported that there are often challenges in integrating and matching data from multiple sources to follow student outcomes through the system. It was reported that some campuses have made strides to follow students within their college, but there is still interest in developing a more comprehensive and systemic approach.

What precedes is only a thumbnail view of the data context of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. By highlighting some leading-edge work that is occurring in other states as well as some suggestions for Kentucky, the sub-group on Data Driven Improvements will have a starting point for recommendations that leverage and use existing data systems that move KCTCS toward more fully embracing a culture of evidence as well as deepening data-driven decision-making.

### **Leading Edge Opportunities**

KCTCS has clearly embraced data in its efforts for improvement—from the system-wide implementation of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, to participation in the Ford Bridges initiative, to early involvement with *Achieving the Dream*/Bridges data collaboration. However, a variety of national initiatives and state efforts underway have helped further thinking around data-driven improvement. Resources from these initiatives can inform the workgroup as it explores possibilities for KCTCS in effectively collecting and using data to drive decision-making on campus and at a system level.

Jobs for the Future has been deeply involved in promoting the strategic use of data nationwide. A recent JFF report, *Building a Culture of Evidence in Community Colleges*, examined the organizing principles that a wide variety of states and colleges employed on their journey to building a culture of evidence in the use of data to drive decision-making. While this report was institutionally focused, the lessons provide an effective frame for viewing data-driven improvement. These lessons cluster into four categories:

- *Set the tone and insist on a culture that elevates evidence and inquiry:* Leaders can drive their systems and messages toward the use of data across the college.
- *Put data in the hands of the users:* Institutional research offices can stimulate demand for data by making sure that the data are both reliable and accessible.
- *Conduct specific analyses that answer important questions about how particular student groups are progressing:* Colleges can start on the path of creating a culture of evidence by conducting longitudinal analyses to identify difficulties for specific populations at specific points along the pipeline to graduation.
- *Tie data analysis and use tightly to planning and budgeting processes:* Instituting strategic planning processes that explicitly tie student outcome data to budget allocations makes clear to stakeholders throughout the college that data matters to institutional priorities and resource allocations.

For more information, see: Allen, Lili & Richard Kazis. 2007. *Building a Culture of Evidence In Community Colleges: Lessons from Exemplary Institutions*. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. [www.jff.org/Documents/cultureofevidenceXS.pdf](http://www.jff.org/Documents/cultureofevidenceXS.pdf)

In considering the leading-edge examples that follow, all strive to embrace these principles to one degree or another and the workgroup on Data Driven Improvements would be well served to consider similar principles when drafting recommendations.

*Achieving the Dream* is the most significant effort currently underway nationwide that is working to build a culture of evidence ([www.achievingthedream.org](http://www.achievingthedream.org)). The use of data is fundamental to *Achieving the Dream* and the goals of the initiative match effectively with the charge to the workgroup on Data Driven Improvements. Firstly, participating colleges use data on student outcomes to drive strategies, monitor progress, and evaluate outcomes. Moreover, *Achieving the Dream* states are seeking opportunities to collect and analyze data in ways that can drive colleges to improve student success while maintaining access. With both state and campus data analyses, *Achieving the Dream* participants strive to use longitudinal data to track student cohorts over several years.

The colleges that engage in *Achieving the Dream* begin a process that moves them toward a campus-wide culture of data-driven improvements. These campuses essentially embrace the

principles identified in *Building a Culture of Evidence* and establish teams to review a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data to assess their performance and diagnose problem areas, including achievement gaps among student groups. Once data are used to identify consistent challenges, resources are marshaled across the campus to develop responses to the identified problem.

*An overview of effective campus processes is available at:*

[www.achievingthedream.org/CAMPUSSTRATEGIES/RESOURCESFORCOLLEGES/resourceguide.tp](http://www.achievingthedream.org/CAMPUSSTRATEGIES/RESOURCESFORCOLLEGES/resourceguide.tp)

Use of data is also integral to advancing state policy work in *Achieving the Dream*. At the state level, there is an examination of student data—including disaggregating outcomes by demographic subgroups—to determine system-wide trends and challenges as well as work to foster the conditions that build a culture of evidence at the campus level. Notable activities include developing plans to strengthen data systems and to devising strategies for benchmarking improvement and success at the college and state levels.

*More information on the state policy framework for Achieving the Dream is available at:*

[www.achievingthedream.org/\\_images/\\_index03/Policy\\_Framework.pdf](http://www.achievingthedream.org/_images/_index03/Policy_Framework.pdf)

One of the more significant efforts of *Achieving the Dream* is the Cross-State Data Work Group. This is a collaboration among some of the early states participating in *Achieving the Dream* to develop a set of indicators for the effective collection, analysis, and use of student outcome data at the state level. The indicators enable states to more effectively track student performance, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, and learn from the strengths of other community college systems through benchmarking common measures. Initial data collected by the Cross-State Data Work Group show some powerful trends among the colleges about indicators of student success. The measures developed are available for other states to examine and begin moving toward within their own data systems.

*An overview of the measures and initial findings is available at: [www.jff.org/~jff/Documents/testdriveforWeb.pdf](http://www.jff.org/~jff/Documents/testdriveforWeb.pdf)*

One of the bigger policy levers identified by the initial cohort of *Achieving the Dream* states are assessment and placement policies. Initial data analyses underscored the scale of the challenge that many students placed in developmental coursework face in completing their educational goals. Just as KCTCS has determined, creating accurate assessment and placement policies are important to improving student outcomes in developmental education. Yet as states went deeper, and as Kentucky found with its Developmental Education Task Force, improving developmental education outcomes requires much more policy work than effectively revamping assessment and placement policies. The JFF report *It's Not About the Cut Score* demonstrated the data-driven approaches that some states took as they revamped developmental education policy.

*For more information, see: Collins, Michael Lawrence. 2008. It's Not About the Cut Score: Redesigning Placement Assessment Policy to Improve Student Success. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. [www.jff.org/Documents/cutscoreforWeb.pdf](http://www.jff.org/Documents/cutscoreforWeb.pdf)*

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has outstanding examples of using data to drive improvements. Most notably, the board examined five years of transcript data for the cohort of Washington community and technical college students who were 25 or older and who entered the system with at most a high school diploma. The study found that students who completed at least one year's worth of college credit courses and earned a certificate or other credential over the period studied earned substantially more than students who did not achieve those milestones. As a result of the "tipping point" study, Washington developed structured funding incentives through the Momentum Points initiative that rewards colleges for student progress past key points identified in the tipping point study and for completion as well.

*For a summary of the tipping point study, see: <http://crc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=600>*

*An overview of momentum points is available at: [www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/education/momentum\\_point\\_calculation\\_mar07.pdf](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/education/momentum_point_calculation_mar07.pdf)*

In addition to deeply examining student outcome data, states have been expanding efforts to better use data to respond to community demographics and labor market needs. As mentioned earlier, KCTCS campuses used such a process with its Career Pathway and community and economic development work. External data are critical tools in ensuring that the college is truly working to address community needs; colleges can use such data to better determine where the most significant gaps exist in the local labor market and make relevant decisions to address those needs. Moreover, such data would also indicate potential partners, student needs, and potential sources of student recruitment. Finally, these sorts of data also provide information to evaluate the effectiveness of the college in promoting the career advancement of participants and meeting the workforce needs of employers. The Workforce Strategy Center has developed a template to help frame collection of external data for gap analysis.

*For more information, see: [www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/Gap\\_Analysis\\_Template.pdf](http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/Gap_Analysis_Template.pdf)*

## **Suggestions for Kentucky**

KCTCS has a number of strategic advantages for the Data Driven Improvements sub-group to build upon. The following suggestions provide places to start the conversation for what improvements best fit KCTCS. These suggestions were developed to reflect the reality of a period of scarce resources. While some have a real dollar cost associated with them, others primarily require time and leadership.

- *Leverage efforts to improve assessment and placement policy.* The Data Driven Improvement sub-group would be well-served to collaborate with other efforts as it revises KCTCS assessment and placement score policies. In addition to cross-walking placement test scores and revising placement policy, the Data Driven Improvement sub-group should work with both the Developmental Education sub-group and KCTCS/JFF's *Breaking Through* efforts to deeply examine the outcomes of students in developmental education and adult basic education. Considering these data will better inform the efforts of each of these groups and likely lead to stronger policy recommendations.
- *Develop solutions to track students throughout the college.* One of the biggest challenges cited to effectively following student outcome data are gaps between the systems used for community and economic development and PeopleSoft. Some campuses have developed protocols for data matching, while others reported continued challenges. Creating a solid foundation of comprehensive data that follows all students as they progress through the college is critical to building a culture of evidence. It is recommended that the workgroup look to the KCTCS campuses that have developed solutions as the very first step of building data matching protocols.
- *Create system and campus dashboards of student outcome data based on the common measures of the Achieving the Dream Cross-State Data Work Group.* There are multiple benefits for KCTCS in creating dashboards that are built upon the common measures of the Achieving the Dream workgroup. These benefits relate to:
  - Developing transparent common protocols for tracking student success across the system;
  - Identifying student outcomes trends through longitudinal data;
  - Providing the tools and foundation to begin a gap analysis and diagnostic process;
  - Building capacity for the use of student data to systematically improve outcomes for underserved populations;
  - Benchmarking KCTCS progress against other states; and
  - Setting system and campus targets for retention and student success.
- *Require campuses to engage in process that builds a culture of evidence.* In addition to creating the measures for a campus-level dashboard, develop a process that enables each KCTCS campus to embrace the principles put forward in *Building a Culture of Evidence*.

This process could resemble a modified, less-intensive version of what campuses explored throughout participation in *Achieving the Dream*. Ideally, each campus will create a cross-campus data leadership team to take a deep look at the college's data. Engaging in such a process would:

- Create a culture of inquiry through identifying and understanding existing data and data sources;
  - Broaden leadership and ownership of student outcomes through cross-campus data teams initiative;
  - Identify data trends associated with relevant student outcomes;
  - Provide tools and foundation to begin a gap analysis and diagnostic process;
  - Conduct solution focused conversations on campuses using data and involving students.;
  - Use data to inform budgeting process; and
  - Strengthen linkages and value to the community through effective use of demographic and labor market data.
- *Conduct a longitudinal study that examines the tipping point of student success for critical populations.* The Washington tipping point study looked at longitudinal outcome data for a population of importance to that state. Part of the charge to the Data Driven Improvement group is to consider data to help more African-American males complete education and training. By engaging in a system-wide view of outcomes for this critical group can potentially help KCTCS identify points that are critical to a student's success. Identification of these points would enable KCTCS to develop interventions for problem areas or incentives to help complete momentum points.

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## **Student Success and Transitions: Breaking Through Sub-Group**

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### **Sub-Group Charge**

Priming the pipeline by serving low-skilled and/or low-income students with special interest in the aged 16-24 population by:

- Enhancing alignment of educational programming with focus on improved alignment of basic skills and occupational/ technical courses and programs;
- Establishing clear labor market payoffs; and
- Creating comprehensive support networks that deliver intrusive career and educational planning and improve the transition and success rates of low-skilled students in technical pathways; reviewing and responding to CPE Admission Guidelines for college-level work; identifying math and writing groups; and identifying emerging best practices for success and transitions.

### **Context**

Since its inception, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System has been striving to promote leading-edge solutions for student success and transitions. At both the system and college levels, there has been tangible recognition that the more students who flow through the pipeline, the more likely a greater number of students will complete credentials at KCTCS. There have been some notable efforts to improve student success and transitions at KCTCS through integration of coursework and services. These include Career Pathways and the Virtual Learning Initiative; it now might also include *Breaking Through*. These efforts have undoubtedly paid dividends: in Measuring Up 2008, Kentucky was recognized as making the most significant gain nationally in the numbers of certificates and degrees awarded at all colleges and universities per 1,000 state residents (ages 18 to 44) without a college degree.

Conversations around the commonwealth found the prevailing belief that good things were happening to promote student success and transitions on a program-by-program basis and were much less prevalent as scalable systemic solutions. Despite making programmatic progress, there was a universal recognition in conversations with stakeholders that there is a tremendous need to improve supports for student success and transitions. There are multiple reasons for this improvement. Many students are entering colleges underprepared to succeed in postsecondary work and are increasingly facing significant academic and personal challenges. Moreover, college staff reported that there is often resistance to change on campus. Despite efforts to promote integrative approaches, the norms on campus are

siloes strategies to address low-skilled students; too few people are held accountable for transitioning students through the educational system. College personnel believed there was a notable need to build better bridges to transition students into other coursework.

One of the key models that KCTCS has invested in that takes an integrative approach to improving student success and transitions is the Career Pathways concept; these efforts begin to address all three priorities outlined in the charge of the Student Success and Transitions sub-group. The goal of Career Pathways is to facilitate mission integration by connecting instructional programs and services to support student advancement and to address labor market needs. These systemic solutions were designed to transform the way colleges do business by instituting policies, procedures, and practices that improve student outcomes in a course of study addressing high-need gaps in the labor market. At least one Pathway has been implemented at each campus.

Most recently, KCTCS has been seriously exploring a partnership with Jobs for the Future and the National Council for Workforce Education to implement the concepts of *Breaking Through* in a state-coordinated effort throughout the system. *Breaking Through* is a national initiative that expands effective strategies that enable low-skilled younger and older adults enter and succeed in community college technical and occupational programs through innovative approaches to integrate programs, accelerate learning, and strengthen labor market payoff for learning. *Breaking Through* started in 2004, and over 30 institutions in 18 states participate. From the outset, Owensboro Community and Technical College has been involved as one of the Leadership Colleges. Again, KCTCS is poised to lead efforts to make Kentucky one of the first states to implement *Breaking Through* concepts at a state level.

The Student Success and Transitions sub-group faces the most expansive potential set (and potentially expensive) of options of all the sub-groups. While there are many policy options that KCTCS can pursue to improve student success and transitions for low-skilled populations, this report grounds the conversation in the initial charge to the sub-group. Moreover, to effectively promote a pipeline for student success for underserved populations, KCTCS would be well served to recognize that the final recommendations of the Student Success and Transitions sub-group should be intertwined with the proposed improvements of the other sub-groups.

What follows are highlights from leading-edge work to promote student success and transitions as well as policy improvement suggestions for Kentucky that are framed in ways that relate to the sub-group's charge. Ideally, this will provide the sub-group on Student Success and Transitions with a starting point for recommendations that leverage existing work and help move KCTCS toward better integrating across the multiple missions of the colleges.

## Leading Edge Opportunities

As evidenced by the variety of student success and transition initiatives, KCTCS is clearly committed to improving the ways in which low-skilled students move through the system. This role has placed Kentucky in a national leadership position in developing these sorts of improvements across the system. The examples that follow highlight exemplary initiatives to improve student success and transitions. Fortunately, a number of these are Kentucky-based and provide more opportunities for scalable implementation.

As mentioned earlier, *Breaking Through* is a significant national effort centered almost entirely on the charge to the Student Success and Transitions sub-group. This partnership between Jobs for the Future and the National Council for Workforce Education started in 2004 and to date *Breaking Through* has worked with 30 colleges in 18 states to align college efforts to better serve low-skilled students. More specifically, *Breaking Through* has focused on:

- *Aligning and linking programs into clear pathways:* Colleges need to reorganize their own programs and link with external programs so students have a better understanding of how they are supposed to move into and through college, and clear pathways for them to do so.
- *Accelerating the pace of learning:* Through the innovative use of assessment tools, restructuring of curriculum, targeted instruction, contextualization, and other strategies, programs should reform the methods and content of delivery so students could meet their goals as quickly as possible.
- *Providing comprehensive support services:* Academic, economic and social support services need to be accessible to (or even aggressively offered) to students whose life challenges put them at risk of not persisting and completing.
- *Promoting labor market connections and payoffs:* Both pre-college and college-level instruction should be restructured to connect instructional content to work and students to actual employers and workplaces.

*More information on Breaking Through is available at: [www.breakingthroughcc.org/index.php](http://www.breakingthroughcc.org/index.php)*

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System started implementing Career Pathways in 2003. Funded at all 16 KCTCS campuses, Career Pathways provides a framework for improvement that addresses all three of the charges to the Student Success and Transitions sub-group. The system office and President's Council have defined a Career Pathway:

*A Career Pathway is a systemic framework that facilitates mission integration by connecting instructional programs and services to support student advancement and to*

*address labor market needs. A systemic career pathway is designed to transform the way colleges do business by instituting policies, procedures, and practices that impact positive outcomes for all students. A systemic career pathway is strategic, synergistic, sustainable, and scalable.*

Each campus implemented Career Pathways through a process that better aligned and connected educational and support programs that enable low-income individuals to get jobs in Kentucky's high-demand industries, and to advance as they complete stepping stones of education and training. While the initial grant to support the Career Pathways process has concluded, many of the KCTCS colleges created sustainable Pathways, while others have developed new initiatives and/or expanded existing efforts. Kentucky's statewide implementation of Career Pathways has been cited as a national exemplar. While the degree to which campuses implemented Pathways varies significantly, this model provides a foundation for integration and labor-market payoff upon which the Student Success and Transitions sub-group can develop recommendations.

*More information on KCTCS' approach to Career Pathways is available at: [www.kctcs.edu/student/careerpathways/About%20KCTCS%20CP.cfm#FundamentalPrinciples](http://www.kctcs.edu/student/careerpathways/About%20KCTCS%20CP.cfm#FundamentalPrinciples)*

*More information on Career Pathways models is available at: [www.workforcestrategy.org/toolkit/bysection](http://www.workforcestrategy.org/toolkit/bysection) and [www.ncwe.org/documents/Envisioningthefuture.pdf](http://www.ncwe.org/documents/Envisioningthefuture.pdf)*

One of the more interesting approaches to integrating coursework that would build to a labor market payoff is the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST) initiative. This pioneering effort provides weighted funding support to pair English as a second language/adult basic education instructors and professional technical instructors in the classroom to concurrently provide students with literacy education and workforce skills. I-BEST students must meet the same academic standards and pass the same industry certifications as traditional workforce students.

Results from the initial pilot were impressive, and I-BEST has been expanded statewide. Ten colleges piloted I-BEST for three years, and students in these pilots earned five times more college credits and were 15 times more likely to complete a workforce education program than other ESL students with the same goals.

*An overview of I-BEST is available at: [www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/abepds/I-BESTone-pager12-3-08.pdf](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/abepds/I-BESTone-pager12-3-08.pdf)*

*More detailed information is available at: [www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/assessment/i\\_best\\_research\\_report\\_05-2.doc](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/assessment/i_best_research_report_05-2.doc)*

The members of the Student Success and Transitions subgroup are likely familiar with the Educational Enrichment Services partnership between Louisville's Jefferson Community and Technical College and Jefferson County Public Schools Adult and Continuing Education.

Educational Enrichment Services was started in 2003 to respond to challenges at both JCTC and JCPSACE: JCTC found poor retention and completion outcomes of lower-level developmental education students, and JCPSACE found that too few of its completers were transitioning to postsecondary education. Both institutions recognized that they were both addressing the pre-college skills development needs of adult learners with very low skills and developed a collaboration to better serve Louisville. Regardless of where the student enters the educational system, they are referred to the appropriate provider based upon their placement test scores. The results of this partnership to move students through the education pipeline have been very positive. KCTCS has promoted policy improvement based on the EES model and a few other KCTCS colleges have sought to replicate EES in their communities.

*A case study of the Educational Enrichment Services program is included in Mwase, Gloria Cross. 2008. Better Together: Realigning Pre-College Skills Development Programs to Achieve Greater Academic Success for Adult Learners. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. [www.jff.org/Documents/BTBetterTogether.pdf](http://www.jff.org/Documents/BTBetterTogether.pdf)*

The Student Success and Transitions sub-group is also charged with considering new models of advising. One impressive example is the Student Success Plan at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio. Using Title III and campus resources, Sinclair has implemented a comprehensive advising program designed to increase success, retention, and graduation rates for at-risk students. Under this initiative, all new degree- or certificate-seeking students are screened after placement testing; individuals meeting two or more risk criteria (placing into two or more developmental courses, poverty level income, undecided major or working full-time) receive more intensive advising and supports. These students participate in the Individual Learning Plan that provides assessments, a case management counseling approach, transition plans from intensive supportive services to self-service, and Web-based systems to create and track the plans. More specifically, the counselor works intensively to help the student successfully plan and navigate through postsecondary education by support efforts such as choosing a major or career goal, developing a plan to pay for educational expenses, identifying resources, reviewing strategies to improve learning and study skills, and registering for classes. Results for the program include:

- Students with an Individual Learning Plan were retained at a higher rate (76 percent) than the all-college retention (66 percent) from fall 2005 to winter 2006.
- Students with an Individual Learning Plan were retained at a higher rate (57 percent) than the all-college retention (47 percent) from fall 2006 to fall 2007.
- Retention for full-time minority students was higher at 75.9 percent, while retention for non-minority students was 73.7 percent from winter 2007 to spring 2007.

*Information on the Student Success Plan is available at:  
[www.sinclair.edu/support/disability/pub/Student%20Success%20Plan.doc](http://www.sinclair.edu/support/disability/pub/Student%20Success%20Plan.doc)*

## Suggestions for Kentucky

KCTCS has a number of strategic advantages for the Student Success and Transitions sub-group to build upon. The following suggestions provide places to start the conversation for what improvements best fit KCTCS. The suggestions attempt to be mindful of the current fiscal reality by leveraging existing initiatives, promoting aligning multiple missions, and proposing collaboration with other sub-groups. That said, improving student success and transitions may require the commitment of additional dollars.

- *Use Breaking Through as a foundation for improvement.* While JFF and KCTCS are negotiating *Breaking Through*, it appears as if the initiative’s strategies of strengthening the linkages between pre-college and college-level programming, and securing clear labor market payoffs at intermediate and final points along technical pathways, make it a valuable resource to the Student Success and Transitions sub-group. If *Breaking Through* is implemented in KCTCS colleges, it would reveal additional policy improvement opportunities to improve student outcomes. At present, opportunities for leveraging *Breaking Through* include:
  - Encouraging and supporting younger adults in technical pathways;
  - Enhancing alignment among the P-16 system and adult education, GED programming, and developmental education; and
  - Developing peer learning network among institutions.
- *Expand Career Pathways.* KCTCS has been very successful in implementing Career Pathways throughout the commonwealth. Given the capacity for Career Pathways built across the system, it is a valuable model for Kentucky to enhance successful educational and workplaces transitions as well as to improve student completion of credentials and/or degrees. The KCTCS system office has been very effective at providing Career Pathways with coordination, technical support, peer-learning networks and an ability to promote permissibility of applying existing funding streams to support Career Pathways (such as KY WINS funds). Moreover, there is synergy between Career Pathways and *Breaking Through*. KCTCS can apply the perspective of *Breaking Through* to its Career Pathway model to improve transitions and solidify the entry points of the Pathway.
- *Pilot integrated coursework with high need sectors.* Explore opportunities to creatively blend funding streams to support pilot integrated teaching and learning similar to Washington State’s I-BEST program. These initiatives have shown themselves to address all of the goals outlined in the charge to the Student Success and Transitions sub-group.

- *Explore new advising models.* Effective advising of high-risk students can result in improved student outcomes. There is promise in exploring new models of advising that blend technology and targeted intensive services like Sinclair’s Student Success Plan

The Student Success and Transitions group is positioned to coordinate with the other planning teams. Potential areas of collaboration include:

- *Establishing retention and student successes as goals.* Creating student success and retention goals and benchmarks was a suggestion made to the Data Driven Improvements sub-group. While collecting and using data are critical steps to improvement of student outcomes, attention should be paid to measures that indicate transition. Moreover, input on the realities of student success and transition will be valuable to structuring the benchmarks so they foster enhanced performance, not create penalties.
- *Assessment & placement policies.* As research from around the nation shows, effective assessment and placement can play a role in a student’s success. The Data Driven Improvements sub-group is charged with responding to the mandate from CPE to revamp assessment and placement policy to recommend new assessment and placement policies. These must be constructed to ensure alignment with the focus of this sub-group.
- *Restructuring developmental education with transitions in mind.* The sub-group on Developmental Education will be developing recommendations in line with CPE Developmental Education Taskforce, *Breaking Through*, and other KCTCS initiatives. The Student Success and Transitions sub-group can support their efforts by considering policy improvements, such as:
  - Expanding replication of Jefferson’s Educational Enrichment Services; and
  - Piloting developmental education courses taught in a technical context. This should include leveraging existing pilots such as Ashland’s Portal and Madisonville’s nursing/A&P efforts, as well as existing work at JCTC.
- *Professional development.* Select student success and transitions as a high priority for professional development across the system and allocate resources accordingly. Potential areas include:
  - Establishing peer learning networks;

- Selecting and promoting strategies for advising students in ways that support student success and transition goals; and
- Structuring state professional development conferences to have student success and transitions focus.

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## Professional Development Sub-Group

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### Sub-Group Charge

- Identifying or specifying critical components of training needed
- Identifying existing and new mechanisms/opportunities across KCTCS and Kentucky (or other appropriate opportunities nationally) to facilitate the professional development/training needed
- Identifying individuals to lead/conduct training and potential resources to support and maintain professional development/training in this area

### Context

Professional development can be critical to creating an effective environment focused on student success. The Professional Development sub-group has an opportunity to develop recommendations that can leverage the Kentucky Community and Technical College System's professional development for systemic improvement. For the purposes of this report, professional development is a facilitated learning opportunity geared toward workplace advancement and falls into two categories: organizational and personal improvement. There are a variety of approaches to professional development, ranging from credentials and coursework, to conferences, to formal and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. Professional development is offered throughout KCTCS at both the campus and system levels.

Across its system, KCTCS has a robust set of professional development activities offered through Teaching and Learning Support Services. TLSS offers professional development support through campus-level coordinators, state systems administrators, and a variety of program offerings. TLSS stands as both a source of information about professional development and a content provider.

TLSS coordinates several programs. Notable examples include:

- New Horizons Teaching and Learning Conference
- President's Leadership Seminar
- Wide variety of individual scholarships and award
- Learning College Initiative
- STEP - Strategies for Teaching Excellence and Professionalism

In addition to KCTCS professional development through TLSS, each campus makes decisions about the sorts of professional development that will be available, as well as about the amount of resources they can commit to this endeavor. While each campus has a TLSS coordinator, the degree to which professional development takes place varies.

Throughout the initial conversations with KCTCS stakeholders, targeted professional development was proposed as an important solution to improving student outcomes. Generally speaking, these sorts of suggestions were embedded within using professional development as a tool to help advance new models of practice. Some of the areas for building professional development capacity that were discussed were improving advising across the campus, the effective use of data, and developmental education.

In times of tight budgets, funds for professional development are often among the first cut. While funding for new professional development might be challenging at present, the Professional Development sub-group can leverage its recommendations by strategically linking them to the key initiatives promoted by the other sub-groups. What follows are some frames to examine professional development, as well as suggestions to help move KCTCS toward better integrating across the multiple missions of the colleges.

### **Leading Edge Opportunities**

A number of national leaders in the community college arena were interviewed in preparation of this report. The goal was to use their knowledge to help identify some of the best examples of professional development for community colleges from around the country. The refrain among these individuals was the same: *no single exemplary program leaps out*. There were a variety of reasons cited for this, but chief among them was the fact that professional development initiatives for community colleges often have many goals. While the overarching goal is generally to improve teaching and learning, other goals arise in the challenge to balance institutional needs and the personal development necessary for an individual to continue to succeed in his or her job. This is not to say that exemplary professional development does not exist, but rather that the efforts are either embedded within a signature program (such as career pathways or learning communities) or are diffused to support individual growth (such as conference attendance, individual coursework, and professional association membership).

Developing new community college leaders is one of the biggest areas of concern throughout the nation, and many states have created initiatives to address this challenge. KCTCS has developed the President's Leadership Seminar as one response. Iowa has developed the Community College Leadership Initiative Consortium and Leadership Institute for a New Century initiatives in an effort to help grow leaders from within. CLIC is designed to encourage growth in current and future college vice presidents, provosts, deans,

directors, and department chairs by focusing on issues such as management and supervision, and community college concerns, as well as networking opportunities to enhance communications among educational institutions. LINC takes a more personal development approach and is designed to encourage and prepare primarily women and people of color for leadership roles. Participants must be nominated and both programs provide the opportunity to earn graduate credit.

*More information on CLIC and LINC is available at: [www.cclp.hs.iastate.edu/profdev.html](http://www.cclp.hs.iastate.edu/profdev.html)*

Many states have found that new technologies enable them to expand professional development. The Texas Collaborative for Teaching Excellence uses on-demand modules in a variety of disciplines to provide professional development to community and technical college faculty, while enabling colleges to *share resources* and *avoid duplication*. This initiative was started in 2002 by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board with Perkins funds. The collaborative's partners developed the on-demand modules that range from discipline-specific themes to teaching and learning foundational topics as well as personal professional development planning tools.

*For more information on the Collaborative, see: [www.texascollaborative.org](http://www.texascollaborative.org)*

### **Suggestions for Kentucky**

Because professional resource dollars are scarce—and likely to become scarcer in the short run—models that address the strategic needs of colleges will likely take greater importance. Limited funds would suggest a strategic approach to professional development by either promoting initiatives that get the biggest bang for the buck by serving the largest number of students or serving areas of critical need or by leveraging the work of other initiatives. Moreover, all three of the other workgroups will likely develop strategic recommendations that require building the capacity on campus. As a result, there will likely be a need to prioritize professional development for these efforts.

- *Strategically focus professional development on integration.* The Professional Development sub-group could select a limited number of cross-cutting focus areas that promote mission integration. This could include targeting a proportion of professional development funds and expanding integrative approaches such as Career Pathways.
- *Review leadership development efforts:* Examine the President's Leadership Seminar to determine if the initiative is producing the results that the system needs. It may be useful to ask such critical questions as: Have enough people participated? Have people moved into positions of leadership with KCTCS?
- *Restructure statewide conference:* Consider reorganizing the New Horizons conference into a focused, cross-site learning opportunity that enables colleges to go deeper into

a selected topic. New Horizons 2.0 might have several tracks but be restructured into a working conference that requires colleges to bring cross-campus teams to address a critical problem (e.g., student advising or developmental education). The benefits of this approach is that it builds on adult learning theory, enables people to “work” on issues away from distractions, does not rely on a single individual as being the repository for knowledge from the event, and builds on the ability to learn from other colleges.

- *Expand collaborative approaches:* Examine ways that the TLSS office can foster greater collaboration across KCTCS to maximize the ways in which professional development is accessed. This could include such opportunities as:
  - Promoting peer learning networks;
  - Using of technology to reach more participants; and
  - Creating regional consortia of professional development to avoid duplication of services.

The Professional Development group is best served to coordinate with the other planning teams. Potential areas of collaboration include:

- *Developmental Education:* This may include such topics as training developmental education faculty in leading pedagogical techniques, alternative delivery models, and using working sessions to create new curricula.
- *Student Success and Transitions:* This may include implementing *Breaking Through*, leveraging Career Pathways, and engaging the college in new advising models.
- *Data Driven Improvements:* This would include working with a broad cross-section of campus staff to build a culture of evidence on campus—building their capacity to better understand how to collect and use data.