

# Career Pathways as a Strategy to Advance Low- Wage Workers— The Kentucky Experience

*Opportunities for Working Families: A  
Leadership Forum for State Lawmakers*  
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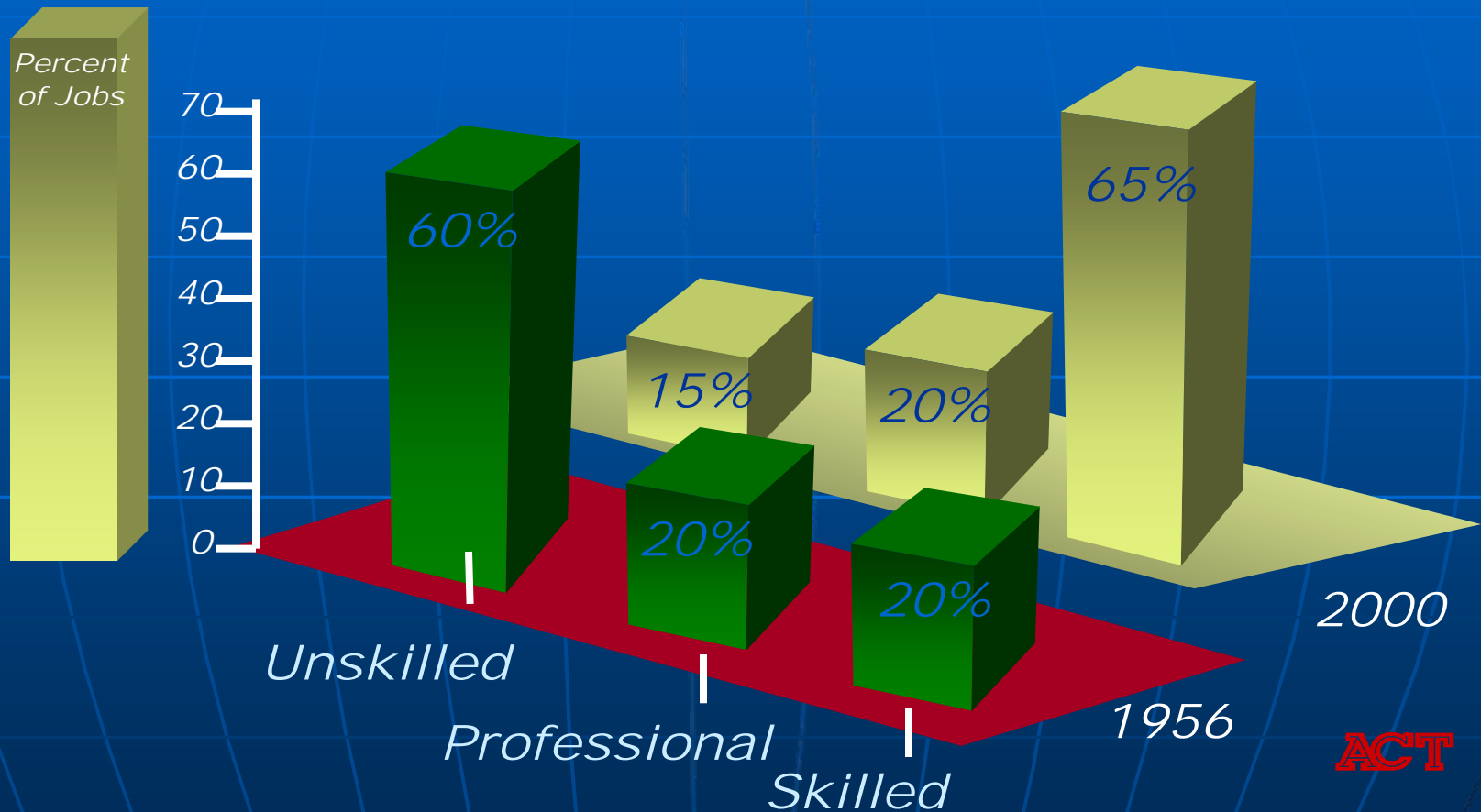
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# Postsecondary Education: Knowledge and Innovation – a necessity across all economies



**Agricultural . . . Industrial . . . Information . . . Molecular  
and Services**

# Changes in Workforce Skill Needs Across Fifty Years



ACT

# Why Skills Matter?

- One recent study found that while low income earners experience some earnings gains over time, only a about a fourth or fewer permanently escaped their low-wage status.

(Andersson, Holzer, and Lane, 2005)

Source: *Wising Up*; CLASP, April 2006)

# Workforce and College Readiness

- *Ready for College and Work: Same or Different? – latest ACT Research*
  - ACT Levels of readiness in reading and mathematics required for entry into college and workforce training are comparable
  - Preparing people for jobs with a “livable” wage and opportunities for advancement

# Educational Barriers for Low-Wage Working Adults

- “Rusty” or poor academic skills
- Negative feelings about past educational experiences
- Many competing family priorities
- Few opportunities for tuition assistance for part-time working adults
  - SREB affordability study
- Coursework not offered at times or places convenient to student
- Education not valued as a path to a better standard of living

# Bridges to Opportunity Initiative

- Ford Foundation
- Multi-year, multi-state foundation initiative
  - Target States (multi-year commitments)
    - Ohio, Kentucky, Louisiana, Colorado, New Mexico, Washington
  - Opportunity States
    - Illinois, California, Maine
- For more info...
  - <http://www.communitycollegcentral.org>

# The Bridges Hypotheses

- Separation of remedial, workforce, and academic missions fails to promote economic and academic advancement for disadvantaged students.
- Public policy reinforces this separation and changes in public policy can foster improved mission integration.
  - The engagement of multiple stakeholders in the policy discourse improves policy and enhances influence.
  - Stakeholder efforts are bolstered by knowledge built through (1) research and (2) innovative models of effective practice.

# Mission Integration

*...is what Mission Integration Does*

- Students starting in one mission area transfer seamlessly to another.
  - High percentage of associates degrees conferred to students who started in remedial and vocational programs.
  - “Credit-izing” non-credit courses.
- Learning is accelerated and high quality.
  - Integrated instruction methods (“learning communities.”)
  - Recognition of prior learning policies.
  - “Chunking” credit courses.

# Mission Integration (2)

- Scheduling, student support, and financial assistance support students across mission areas.
- Larger numbers of students are prepared for further education AND the workplace.
  - Pathways enable disadvantaged students to attend four-year institutions.
  - Industry partnership programs place students in career jobs.

# The Kentucky Experience

# Kentucky's Challenges

- Challenges in reaching the national average in per capita income by 2020 –
  - **Kentucky's national ranking in per capita personal income was 41<sup>st</sup> in 2004 (occupied for 35 years)**
  - **42% of Kentucky adults read or write at Basic or Below Basic levels of literacy (2003 State Assessment of Adult Literacy)**
  - **In 2002, 54% of college entrants were under prepared in at least one subject**
  - **Gender gap: 55% of KCTCS enrollment is women (57% in 4 year institutions)**

# Career Pathways

A new national movement...  
but what are they?

# Career Pathways Definition

*A systemic framework for developing a series of connected instructional strategies, with integrated work experience, and support services that enables students to combine school and work and advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education and training. Career pathways are targeted to regional labor markets, focused on employment sectors, and provide a framework for workforce development by integrating the programs and resources of community colleges and other education providers, workforce agencies and social service providers.*

**NKU**

**BS in Mechanical and  
Manufacturing Engineering  
Technology**  
Other Degree Programs

**Plant Manager / Manufacturing Executive**

**\$90,000+**

**Bachelors Degree and/or Experience  
(with 2-8 years of experience)**

**Manufacturing Management  
and Engineer Positions**  
**\$40,000 and up**

**Gateway**

**Manufacturing Degree Programs  
Associate of Applied Science**

- Manufacturing Engineering Technology (pending approval)
- Industrial and Engineering Technology – Computer Maintenance
- Industrial Maintenance Technology
- General and Occupational Studies
  - Computer Aided Drafting
  - Electrical Technology
  - Machine Tool Technology
  - Welding Technology

**Associate Degree and/or Experience  
(with 2-3 years of experience)**

**Technician (Manufacturing /  
Engineering / Maintenance / Electrical)  
First-line Supervisor,  
Computer Aided Drafting,  
Machine Operator, Skilled  
Trade Positions**  
**\$23,000 - \$36,000**

COMPASS / ACT

**Employability Assessments**

Kentucky Employability Certificate (KEC)  
Kentucky Manufacturing Skills Standard (KMSS)  
WorkKeys

**HS Diploma / GED  
and/or Experience (with 2  
years of experience)**

**General Manufacturing and  
Laborer Positions**  
**Minimum wage – low \$20,000s**

**Pathway  
Entry Points**

Adult Ed  
Area Technology Centers  
High Schools  
Incumbent Workers  
One Stop

# Career Pathways – a P-20 mechanism for change

- I. Career Pathways are not a “program” – they are a systemic framework for a new way of doing business in our colleges and communities.
- II. Career Pathways are a strategic tool for institutional transformation.
- III. Career Pathways are policy and funding levers.

# Career Pathways – a P-20 mechanism for change

- iv. Career Pathways are a transition tool from secondary to postsecondary to life long learning.
- v. Career Pathways are an economic development tool – with a particular focus on industry clusters.
- vi. Career Pathways are a tool to strengthen and formalize connections to business.

# Career Pathways – a P-20 mechanism for change

- vii. Career Pathways are a tool to enhance community strategic partnerships -- with particular focus on the public workforce investment system, adult education providers, and non-traditional students.
- viii. Career Pathways are an upward mobility tool for individuals.
- ix. Career Pathways are an accountability tool.

# Who benefits from effective career pathways?

- Adults who are working and need a higher set of skills to advance
- High school students transitioning to work and postsecondary
- Dislocated workers
- People with degrees that need additional/updated skills
- Businesses who need skilled workers
- The economies of our communities, regions, states and our nation!

# Bridging the Gaps for Students

<p><b>“Rusty” or poor academic skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Remedial bridges</li><li>■ Improved assessments</li></ul>
<p><b>Negative feelings about school</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ More counseling and advising</li><li>■ Success found in small increments (modularized courses)</li></ul>
<p><b>Many competing family priorities</b></p>	<p>More counseling and advising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Alliances with social service support networks</li></ul>

# Bridging the Gaps for Students (2)

**Few opportunities for tuition assistance**

- **Alliances with business, workforce investment boards, etc.**
- **Advocate for changes in tuition assistance policies**
- **Inclusion of work experience**

# Bridging the Gaps for Students (3)

**Education not valued as a path to a better standard of living**

**Wage increases/job advancement given as skills are increased**

**Coursework not offered at times or places convenient to student**

- **Evening and weekend classes**
- **Modularized and "chunked" courses**
- **E-learning (blended learning)**
- **Offered on site at the business**

# Bridging the Gaps for Employers

**Skills taught must be “driven” by needs of employers**

- Curriculum is “driven” by business needs
- New programs
- New courses
- Flexible and responsive programming (E-Town)

**Industry “clusters” need workers with similar skill sets**

- Efficiencies of scale
- “Growing” clusters of innovation and talent
  - Automotive
  - Allied Health
  - NARA

# Institutional Transformation

- High leverage policy areas:
  - Award college credit for business training (BIT)
  - Seat time does not = competency
    - Secondary reform initiative
  - Expedited program approval process
  - Create a system of industry-based certifications (including employability skills certifications)

# Institutional Transformation

- Alignment and integration:
  - Align and connect company training requirements with college courses
  - Modularize courses/fractional credit
  - Eliminate internal silos (mission integration)

# Instructional Re-engineering

- Multiple entry/exit points
- “Chunking” curriculum
- Alternative delivery systems
- Adaptive expertise (reducing cycle time of learning)
- Learner-centered, innovative instruction

# Budget Implications

- Many of the changes can be accomplished with existing or leveraged resources (instructional re-engineering, policy changes, enhanced collaborative relationships with business)
- Primary investment of new or reallocated funds:
  - Curriculum development
  - Staff to coordinate an industry sector pathway
  - Additional resources for student advising and counseling

# Kentucky's Projected ROI

- 18 Pathways (to date)
  - Allied Health
  - Advanced Manufacturing
  - Construction
  - Transportation
- KCTCS KY WINS (Workforce Trust Funds for training) commitment of \$3.5M
- Projected project revenue of \$835,640
- Cash and in kind contributions of \$3.1M

# Career Pathways: Lessons Learned

- Bridge the gap between adult education and postsecondary education.
- Anticipate that curricula development will be a major challenge.
- Support significant autonomy at the local/regional level – within the context of a statewide vision. Policy barriers will most often need to be addressed at the state level.
- Combine an industry-based or career readiness certificate with career pathways initiatives to add significant value.
  - **Kentucky Employability Certificate**

# Career Pathways: Lessons Learned (2)

- Employers recognize the career pathway model as representing a significant effort to meet their long standing workforce development pipeline needs.
  - Demographic trends
- Quality “wrap-around” support services are critical to success.
- Development must take place in the context of a collaborative framework -- substantively linking and leveraging the efforts of P-20 education (K-12, postsecondary and adult education), workforce (one-stop system), and community based organizations.

What concrete steps can you take as policymakers and/or community leaders?

1. Address funding stream constraints
  - Minimize funding stream “silos”
  - Leverage funding streams (TANF, WIA, general funds, etc)
  - Change funding formulas for more flexibility (ADA)
  - Tuition assistance for part-time students
  - Provide incentives for P-20 and workforce to work collaboratively to develop career pathways

What concrete steps can you take as policymakers and/or community leaders?

2. Support the development of effective P-20 Councils.
3. Require, encourage or provide incentives to institutions to transform their way of doing business. (see institutional transformations and instructional re-engineering slides)

# In summary...

- A relatively small amount of leveraged funds can pay big dividends in developing career pathways initiatives if:
  - Stakeholders are committed to working collaboratively and changing the way they do business.
  - We identify and reduce policy and funding stream barriers that get in the way.

# *The Kentucky Journey to Educational Attainment and Economic Success*

*“Random Acts of Progress”*



*“Best Practices”*



*“Strategic Systems”*

# Resource links

- *ACT - Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different?*
  - <http://www.act.org/path/policy/reports/workready.html>
- *Career Pathways – Aligning Public Resources to Support Individual and Regional Economic Advancement in the Knowledge Economy* (Jenkins, Workforce Strategy Center)
  - <http://www.optopark.com/client/WSC/WSCDraft5.12.pdf>
- **Kentucky Employability Certificate**
  - <http://www.kctcs.edu/kec/>
- *Wising Up: How Government Can Partner With Business to Increase Skills and Advance Low-Wage Workers* (Duke, et. al., CLASP)
  - [http://www.clasp.org/publications/wise\\_up\\_2006.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/publications/wise_up_2006.pdf)

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