

# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## The College Completion Challenge

### Fact Sheet

#### What is the College Completion Challenge?

The College Completion Challenge commits to increasing the number of community college students completing a degree or other credential by 50% - to 5 million students by the year 2020.

#### How and why are community colleges supporting the College Completion Challenge?

This goal was set in 2010 when the American Association of Community Colleges and other leaders joined forces to make history by collectively signing an agreement, *Democracy's Colleges: A Call to Action*. In 2009, President Obama called on community colleges to reach for this goal – which is attainable – if we all work together and focus on eliminating barriers to success.

*Only three in ten community college students complete a degree. That is not good enough.*

#### How many community colleges students don't complete a credential or degree?

- **College completion rates today are dismally low.** Only 34% of all college students graduate with a degree from a two or four-year college.<sup>1</sup> Only 3 out of 10 students who start at community colleges full-time graduate with an associate degree in three years.<sup>2</sup>
- **Nationally, too few students are completing college.** The United States ranked sixth (See Figure 1) in postsecondary attainment in the world among 25-64 year-olds with only 40.3% of the population holding an associate's degree or higher.<sup>3</sup>
- **The numbers are even worse for minority populations.** Only 19.2 percent of Latinos between the ages of 25 and 34 had earned an associate's degree or higher—less than half the national average of 41.1 percent and the lowest of any major racial or ethnic group.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2011, June). *Affordability and transfer: Critical to increasing baccalaureate degree completion*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from [http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa\\_at/index.shtml](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa_at/index.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Higher Education Management Systems - Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis (2009). *Progress and completion: Graduation rates*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?measure=19>

<sup>3</sup> College Board Advocacy and Policy Center (2011). *The college completion agenda 2010 progress report executive summary*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from [http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports\\_pdf/Progress\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports_pdf/Progress_Executive_Summary.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> College Board Advocacy and Policy Center (2011). *The college completion agenda 2011 progress report. Latino edition*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from [http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/latino\\_pdf/progress\\_report\\_latino\\_2011.pdf](http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/latino_pdf/progress_report_latino_2011.pdf)



- **Even students enrolled in structured programs, can struggle to finish.** Nearly 4 out of 10 (38%) of those who enroll in occupational certificate programs and 6 out of 10 (58%) of those enrolling in occupational associate degree programs fail to earn a credential of any type within six years.<sup>5</sup>

### Why Do Some Students Not Complete a Degree or Credential?

- **Students start behind. They don't arrive "ready" for college.**

Six out of 10 students entering community colleges must take remedial courses to make up for knowledge and skills they did not learn in high school. This puts them at a severe disadvantage when they enter college for the very first time.<sup>6</sup> Half of students seeking an associate's degree need remedial classes. Only 13.1% of remedial students finish a certificate within a year and a half, 9.5% of them complete an associate's degree, and 35.4% of them complete a bachelor's degree.<sup>7</sup>

*"Today we have flat-lined, while other countries have passed us by."*

*U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan  
The Washington Post, August 9, 2010*

- **Many students do not have role models to follow.** Forty-two percent of community college students are the first generation in their families to attend college.<sup>8</sup>
- **College costs are going up.** College costs have risen 400% in the last 25 years. Even with their modest tuition, community college costs have risen 200% in the last 7 years and 7.3% since 2009.<sup>9</sup>
- **Financial aid does not meet student needs.** Full-time, full-year community college students from families with the lowest incomes averaged \$6,544 of unmet financial need per year; students from the lower middle income quartile had an average unmet need of nearly \$5,000.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Wheary, J. & Orozco, V. (2010). *Graduated success: Sustainable economic opportunity through one- and two-year credentials*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from *Dēmos* web site:

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated\\_Success\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated_Success_Demos.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Wheary, J. & Orozco, V. (2010). *Graduated success: Sustainable economic opportunity through one- and two-year credentials*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from *Dēmos* web site: Retrieved October 27, 2011, from

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated\\_Success\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated_Success_Demos.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Complete College America (2011). *Time is the enemy*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from

[http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time\\_Is\\_the\\_Enemy.pdf](http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time_Is_the_Enemy.pdf) (page 14)

<sup>8</sup> American Association of Community Colleges (2011). *Fast facts*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfacts.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> Community College Completion Corps (2010). *Student guide*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from

<http://www.cccompletioncorps.org/cccorps/sites/default/files/pdfs/student-guide-low-res.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Orozco, V. (2009). *Work less, study more and succeed: How financial supports can improve postsecondary success*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, , from *Dēmos* web site:

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/WorkLessStudyMore\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/WorkLessStudyMore_Demos.pdf)

- **Today's students often carry responsibilities into the classroom.** More than 80% of all community college students are employed full or part-time.<sup>11</sup> Many juggle family responsibilities while going to college and are caring for children and other family members while earning a living and going to college.

### What effects does non-completion have on people and our country?

- **For students, not completing a credential or degree can be devastating personally.** Some feel like they failed. Many will not return to campus.
- **It's also devastating financially for the student – and his or her family members - for a lifetime.** Without a credential or degree, adults are often trapped in low-wage jobs and struggling to make ends meet and support their families. The lifetime earnings gap between those with a high school education and those with a college degree is now estimated to be nearly \$1 million. In 2008, median earnings of workers with bachelor's degrees were 65% higher than those of high school graduates (\$55,700 vs. \$33,800). Similarly, workers with associate's degrees earned 73% more than those who had not completed high school (\$42,000 vs. \$24,300).<sup>12</sup>
- **Employers are not able to find enough workers with the skills they need.** Today's employers are scrambling to locate workers who are qualified to fill the jobs they have available – too many don't have the skills needed. And it's only going to get worse. By 2018, 63% of all jobs will require at least some postsecondary education – but not enough students are completing credentials or degrees. Employers will need 22 million new workers with postsecondary credentials. If current college completion rates remain the same, employers will be short 3 million workers by 2018. That's a deficit of 300,000 college graduates, piling up, each year.<sup>13</sup>
- **Our prosperity is at stake. America is falling behind other industrialized nations.** The United States ranks behind 11 countries in the share of young workers with associate's degrees. Among 25- to 34-year olds, slightly more than 40% have associate's degrees or higher, only a little higher than for their parents' generation.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> American Association of Community Colleges (2011). *Fast facts*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfacts.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> College Board Advocacy and Policy Center (2010). *Education pays 2010*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from [http://trends.collegeboard.org/education\\_pays](http://trends.collegeboard.org/education_pays)

<sup>13</sup> Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2010). *Press release: New jobs forecast predicts millions of workers at risk of being left behind*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from <http://cew.georgetown.edu/uploadedfiles/Press%20Release%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> College Board Advocacy and Policy Center (2010). *The college completion agenda 2010 progress report*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from [http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports\\_pdf/Progress\\_Report\\_2010.pdf](http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports_pdf/Progress_Report_2010.pdf)



## How You Can Get Involved

- **Students** – pledge to complete your education path at community college. Take a pledge to complete at your college, or start a pledge drive using the toolkit found at: [www.cccompletioncorps.org/ptk](http://www.cccompletioncorps.org/ptk)
- **College staff and administrators** – set a goal to raise completion rates at your college, form a working group, and rally college stakeholders to support completion and make changes when needed.
- **Business and community leaders** – contact your local community college and ask about their work to raise completion rates. Offer an internship or scholarship program to help students complete their educations. Volunteer to serve on an advisory committee, or talk to the press about the challenges businesses face in locating trained workers.

## Partners in the College Completion Challenge

The Community College Completion Challenge, [www.cccompletionchallenge.org](http://www.cccompletionchallenge.org)

American Association of Community Colleges, [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)

Association of Community College Trustees, [www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org)

The Center for Community College Student Engagement, [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org)

League for Innovation in the Community College, [www.league.org](http://www.league.org)

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, [www.nisod.org](http://www.nisod.org)

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, [www.ptk.org](http://www.ptk.org)



# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## Building the Case for Completion

**Too few students today are completing college credentials or degrees. Too many are giving up on their dreams for a better life, and our nation is falling behind other countries.** <sup>1</sup> Only 34% of all college students graduate with a degree from a two or four-year college. <sup>2</sup> Only three out of 10 students who start at community colleges full-time graduate with an associate degree in three years. <sup>3</sup>

### What We Are Doing About It

We are committed to increasing the number of community college students completing a degree or credential by 50% - to five million students by the year 2020. But it will take a movement – of colleges, students, employers and community leaders – to meet the college completion challenge. Consider getting involved today!

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Pages/default.aspx>

### Why Completion Matters to Colleges

- **We don't want for students to fail – we want for them to succeed.** Fewer than three out of 10 students who start at community colleges full-time graduate with an associate degree in three years. <sup>4</sup>
- **Too many give up, and we must eliminate the barriers that prevent them from succeeding.** Nearly four out of ten (38%) of those who enroll in occupational certificate programs and six out of 10 (58%) of those enrolling in occupational associate degree programs fail to earn a credential of any type within six years. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> College Board Advocacy and Policy Center (2010). *The college completion agenda 2010 progress report. Executive summary*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from

[http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports\\_pdf/Progress\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports_pdf/Progress_Executive_Summary.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2011, June). *Affordability and transfer: Critical to increasing baccalaureate degree completion*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from

[http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa\\_at/index.shtml](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa_at/index.shtml)

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Higher Education Management Systems - Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis (2009). *Progress and completion: Graduation rates*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?measure=19>

<sup>4</sup> National Center for Higher Education Management Systems - Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis (2009). *Progress and completion: Graduation rates*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?measure=19>

<sup>5</sup> Wheary, J. & Orozco, V. (2010). *Graduated success: Sustainable economic opportunity through one- and two-year credentials*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from *Dēmos* web site:

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated\\_Success\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated_Success_Demos.pdf)



- **We need to graduate more students.** Our national completion rate is causing a deficit of 300,000 college graduates every year between 2010 and 2018. By 2018, employers will be short 3 million workers.<sup>6</sup>
- **Our mission is to educate the people – and to turn no student away.** America’s community colleges offer an open door to opportunity to all who would come, are innovative and agile in meeting economic and workplace needs, and provide value and service to individuals and communities.
- **Our system prides itself on flexibility for working adults, but we are failing too many of them.** Surveys of students who have left college without completing a credential routinely cite employment and finances as the reasons for departing. One study found that nearly 40% of students who worked full time while enrolled dropped out within 3 years, compared to 19% of students who worked part time and 13% who did not work.<sup>7</sup>

### Why Completion Matters to Students

- **Leaving college means leaving behind your dreams.** While 65% of students who drop out plan to return, only about 38% of them do come back to the classroom.<sup>8</sup> Once you are out of college, it is very hard to go back.
- **A credential or degree is becoming more necessary if you want a job– not less.** By 2018, America will have a shortage of 3 million college graduates, as nearly two-thirds (63%) of available jobs in the nation will require an associate degree or higher.<sup>9</sup>
- **You can expect to earn more money with a credential or degree – than without one.** The average expected lifetime earnings for a graduate with an associate degree are \$1.6 million dollars. This is about \$400,000 more in earnings, over a lifetime, than someone with only a high school diploma.
- **In some cases, college certificate holders can earn more than even a graduate with a four-year degree.** Eight years after graduating from high school, 27% of those holding a

<sup>6</sup> Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2010). *Press release: New jobs forecast predicts millions of workers at risk of being left behind.* Retrieved October 27, 2011, from <http://cew.georgetown.edu/uploadedfiles/Press%20Release%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Orozco, V. (2009). *Work less, study more and succeed: How financial supports can improve postsecondary success.* Retrieved October 27, 2011, , from *Dēmos* web site:

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/WorkLessStudyMore\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/WorkLessStudyMore_Demos.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Community College Completion Corps (2010). *Student guide.* Retrieved October 27, 2011, from <http://www.cccompletioncorps.org/cccorps/sites/default/files/pdfs/student-guide-low-res.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Carnevale, A.P, Smith, N. & Strohl, J. (2010). *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018.* Retrieved October 27, 2011 from Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/ExecutiveSummary-web.pdf>



community college certificate as their highest degree earn a median annual salary that is higher than someone holding a bachelor's degree.<sup>10</sup>

### Why Completion Matters to Business and Community Leaders

- **Our workforce is becoming less-educated – and will need more on-the-job training.** For the first time in U.S. history, the current generation of college-age Americans will be less educated than their parents – unless things change quickly.<sup>11</sup>
- **Jobs of the future require education.** By 2018, 63% of all jobs will require at least some postsecondary education.<sup>12</sup>
- **Employers can't find workers who are qualified for the jobs they have available today.** Employers are already struggling now to find workers who are qualified for the jobs they have available. Employers will need 22 million new workers with postsecondary degrees by 2018 – and studies shows that the United States will fall short by 3 million workers.<sup>13</sup>
- **Completion rates impact unemployment levels –which impact local economies and tax bases.** In the current recession, unemployment rates are twice as high for those with just a high school diploma (10.8%) compared to those with a bachelor's degree or higher (4.9%).<sup>14</sup>
- **When a community is more educated, wages increase across the board.** Increases in the proportion of a region's population with a bachelor's degree result in wage increases for *all* workers in the region, regardless of education level.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Wheary, J. & Orozco, V. (2010). *Graduated success: Sustainable economic opportunity through one- and two-year credentials*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from *Dēmos* web site:

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated\\_Success\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated_Success_Demos.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> National Center for Higher Education Management Systems - Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis (2009). *Educational capital: Educational attainment by degree-level and age-group* (American Community Survey). Retrieved October 27, 2011 from

<http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/?level=nation&mode=data&state=0&submeasure=240>

<sup>12</sup> Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2010). *Press release: New jobs forecast predicts millions of workers at risk of being left behind*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from

<http://cew.georgetown.edu/uploadedfiles/Press%20Release%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (2010). *Press release: New jobs forecast predicts millions of workers at risk of being left behind*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from

<http://cew.georgetown.edu/uploadedfiles/Press%20Release%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011). *Economic news release*. Retrieved October 27, 2011 from

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t04.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Baum, S. & Ma, J. (2007). *Education pays. The benefits of higher education for individuals and society*. Retrieved October 27, 2011 from

[http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/about/news\\_info/trends/ed\\_pays\\_2007.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/trends/ed_pays_2007.pdf)



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

# College Completion Challenge Toolkit

## Resources to Help Colleges Help Students

### **A Sound Investment: The Community College Dividend**

*American Association of Community Colleges, 2011*

Community colleges receive proportionately less public support than four-year colleges and universities, says this policy brief. In 2007–2008, community colleges received only 27% of total federal, state, and local revenues for, higher education. This funding gap hinders the ability of colleges to support students in completing their credentials and degree.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Briefs/Pages/pb03072011.aspx>

### **A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education**

*Lumina Foundation for Education, 2010*

Lumina Foundation for Education has been calling for the United States to increase higher education attainment rates — the proportion of the population that holds a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential — to 60% by the year 2025. This report summarizes progress toward this goal, as well as the gap between current performance and the need. This report refines the methodology used to calculate higher education attainment, particularly at the state and county levels. The report includes individual profiles for all 50 states. The authors assess their deepening understanding of the factors driving the need to increase attainment, as well as some of the implications of the Big Goal for colleges and universities, higher education systems, and state and federal policy.

[http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A\\_stronger\\_nation.pdf](http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A_stronger_nation.pdf)

### **Affordability and Transfer: Critical to Increasing Baccalaureate Degree Completion**

*National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2011*

This policy brief addresses baccalaureate degree completion and the vital role of community colleges as the entry point for many students seeking bachelor's degrees. It focuses particularly on states with rapidly growing young populations, where ethnic groups and low-income students with low rates of college participation and completion are most concentrated. The report notes that community colleges are more crucial than ever, but that state financial aid and transfer policies enabling students to move from two-year colleges to baccalaureate-granting institutions are not keeping pace with current needs.

[http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa\\_at/index.shtml](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa_at/index.shtml)



## **Another Kind of Higher Education**

*American RadioWorks, 2011*

Certificates can be more useful than college degrees for some students, says this article. The skills students learn in certificate programs will be increasingly in demand as the economy grows and becomes more complex according to economist Tony Carnevale, director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. People can get certificates in a wide range of fields, from traditional occupations such as welding and machine tools to newer fields such as computer information systems and surgical technology. For some, getting a certificate can be more valuable than getting an associate degree. A longitudinal study of workers found that about 40% of those with certificates or licenses were earning more money than their peers with just an associate degree; more than a quarter of those with certificates or licenses were making more than those with bachelor's degrees.

<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/tomorrows-college/dropouts/another-higher-ed.html>

## **Bringing Them Back: Data Mining is Key to College Completion Efforts**

*Adult College Completion Network, 2011*

Identifying adults who started college but did not finish a degree or certificate can help policymakers and educators remove barriers to completion. Working with data is critical to completion efforts. In South Dakota “parachute degrees” were implemented to allow students to transfer to a more general degree program and quickly complete their educations.

<http://www.adultcollegecompletion.org/content/dataMining>

## **California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force**

*California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2011*

The task force is examining best practices and effective models within higher education to improve educational achievement in California. The task force has produced a draft of recommendations and will develop a plan to be presented to the Legislature no later than March 2012. Read their proposed recommendations, see the announcement for the task force, post a comment, and find out about task force meetings.

<http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/PolicyInAction/StudentSuccessTaskForce.aspx>

## **Changing Course: A Guide to Increasing Student Completion in Community Colleges**

*Completion by Design Assistance Team (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)*

The goal of this guide is to assist community college faculty, staff, and administrators as they begin rethinking and redesigning their systems, programs, and instruction to increase student completion. The guide identifies the goals of the Completion by Design initiative; summarizes key design principles for improving completion rates; and offers a common language. It is understood that the community colleges participating in the initiative bring a wide range of expertise and skills to this process and that their work will refine and advance what we know about improving student completion rates in community colleges.

[http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/changing\\_course\\_V1\\_fb\\_10032011.pdf](http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/changing_course_V1_fb_10032011.pdf)



### **Changing Course: A Planning Tool for Increasing Student Completion in Community Colleges** *Completion by Design Assistance Team (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)*

This planning tool draws from the ideas described in *Changing Course: A Guide to Increasing Student Completion in Community Colleges* and is designed to serve as a complement to that document. This planning tool offers a series of self-reflective questions to assist community colleges in examining their areas of strength and their emphasis on increasing student success on their campuses. As colleges use these questions and other inquiry-based processes to rethink and redesign their services and programs, this tool also provides them with information about the range of practices implemented by community colleges to improve completion rates. [http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/changing\\_course\\_tool\\_10032011.pdf](http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/changing_course_tool_10032011.pdf)

### **Changing the Conversation about Productivity: Strategies for Engaging Faculty and Institutional Leaders**

*Public Agenda, 2011*

This report focuses on more effectively engaging faculty members in discussions about productivity. The insights and strategies are drawn from three focus groups with faculty at both 2-year and 4-year institutions. Recommendations are also influenced by 25 in-depth, one-on-one interviews with college presidents, researchers, representatives of collective bargaining associations, disciplinary associations, accrediting bodies, faculty professional development organizations, and representatives from a wide range of higher education consortia.

### **Colleges Accepting the Challenge**

*American Association of Community Colleges, 2010-present*

List of colleges on the AACC website that have signed onto the College Completion Challenge. If your college is considering getting involved, check this handy list for a nearby college in your community or state. Give them a call and ask what they are doing to tear down barriers to student achievement and improve completion rates.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Pages/collegeacceptchallenge.aspx>

### **The College Completion Agenda: 2010**

*College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, 2010*

This 228-page report recommends a 10-part action agenda that will raise the percentage of students completing degrees or postsecondary credentials. The report notes that progress is happening, particularly in simplifying the college application and admission process, strengthening the alignment of K–12 expectations to college admission standards and improving teacher quality. Other indicators, such as those showing progress in universal preschool and middle and high school counseling, are lagging. By eliminating the severity of disparities between underrepresented minorities and white Americans, it is estimated that more than half the degrees needed to meet the 55% completion goal would be produced.

[http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports\\_pdf/Progress\\_Report\\_2010.pdf](http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports_pdf/Progress_Report_2010.pdf)



## **The College Completion Agenda: 2011 Progress Report, Latino Edition**

*College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, 2011*

Only 19.2% of Latinos ages 25 to 34 years old have obtained an associate degree or higher. The United States cannot reach its college completion goal without increasing college completion for Latinos. This report delivers measures to assess their educational attainment and provides approaches for integrating the Latino community into completion efforts. Information is structured around 10 recommendations from the 2008 Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education that span the P–20 educational continuum. Recommendations are: (1) provide a program of voluntary preschool education, universally available to children from low-income families, (2) improve middle and high school college counseling, (3) implement the best research-based dropout prevention programs, (4) align the K–12 education system with international standards and college admission expectations, (5) improve teacher quality and focus on recruitment and retention, (6) clarify and simplify the admission process, (7) provide more need-based grant aid while simplifying the financial aid system and making it more transparent, (8) keep college affordable, (9) dramatically increase college completion rates, and (10) provide postsecondary opportunities as an essential element of adult education programs. [http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/latino\\_pdf/progress\\_report\\_latino\\_2011.pdf](http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/latino_pdf/progress_report_latino_2011.pdf)

## **The College Completion Agenda State Policy Guide**

*College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, 2011*

Produced in cooperation with the National Council of State Legislatures, this policy guide provides helpful information for state policymakers seeking to raise the percentage of students completing college degrees or postsecondary education credentials. An overview of relevant research, questions to ask, state policy strategies for addressing problems, and samples are included.

[http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports\\_pdf/Policy\\_Guide.pdf](http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports_pdf/Policy_Guide.pdf)

## **The College Completion Agenda State Policy Guide: Latino Edition**

*College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, 2011*

The College Board, the National Council of La Raza and Excelencia in Education created this guide to aid college completion efforts. The guide is framed by the 10 recommendations made by the Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education convened by the College Board and is intended to help policymakers generate solutions to the challenges facing Latino youth and their families so they can prepare, access and complete college in greater numbers. The guide provides background, research and issues for legislators to be aware of, and promising state policy efforts to increase the number of Latinos in the U.S. who earn a postsecondary degree.

[http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/latino\\_pdf/policy\\_guide\\_latino\\_2011.pdf](http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/latino_pdf/policy_guide_latino_2011.pdf)



## **The College Completion Toolkit**

*The U.S. Department of Education, 2011*

This toolkit offers practical advice for state policymakers seeking to improve higher education systems by enhancing supports for college completion and postsecondary education.

Strategies discussed in the report include: making it easier for students to transfer, utilizing performance-based funding, aligning high school standards with college admission requirements, using data to drive decision-making, accelerating learning while reducing costs, and targeting adults with some college education but no degree.

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/college\\_completion\\_tool\\_kit.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/college_completion_tool_kit.pdf)

## **Community College Completion Corps**

This website features resources to support the College Completion Challenge produced by the six organizations signing the challenge – the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, the Center for Community College Student Engagement, the League for Innovation, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development and Phi Theta Kappa. Resources for students, administrators, faculty and policymakers are featured.

<http://www.cccompletioncorps.org>

## **Community College Students and Grant Aid: Bringing Equity to the Provision of Grant Aid by States and Institutions**

*Dēmos, 2011*

Low-income students who attend community college receive less state and institutional grant aid, on average, than their counterparts at four-year public universities. This report recommends that states equalize need-based grant allocations and that community colleges prioritize need-based institutional aid. The brief also highlights the need to strengthen college fundraising capabilities, as their limited financial resources impede their ability to help needy students.

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/BRIEF\\_CommunityCollegeStudents\\_GrantAid\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/BRIEF_CommunityCollegeStudents_GrantAid_Demos.pdf)

## **Community Colleges and Remedial Education**

*Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*

For many students, these remedial classes are an educational dead end. Studies have shown that 3 out of every 4 students who take remedial classes will not graduate within 8 years, compared to 40% of students not required to take remedial courses. Despite these troubling outcomes, it is estimated community colleges continue to spend \$2 billion per year on remediation. This document outlines steps the Foundation is taking to help colleges and outlines strategies that are working for colleges.

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/postsecondaryeducation/Pages/community-colleges-remedial-education.aspx>



## **The Completion Agenda: A Call to Action**

*American Association of Community Colleges, 2010*

This 11-page report highlights many examples showing how community colleges are supporting the national initiative to help students complete educational credentials. The document summarizes the November 2010 meetings of the American Association of Community College Commissions and Board of Directors. Attendees offered suggestions for a completion toolkit and discussed strategies for overcoming obstacles facing colleges as they implement this initiative. Accountability was a key discussion item for participants and several resources are listed to help colleges. If you are seeking a document to stimulate your college staff and faculty to consider the multi-layered issues involving completion and how your institution can be involved, this is a great document to start from.

[http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Reports/Documents/CompletionAgenda\\_report.pdf](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Reports/Documents/CompletionAgenda_report.pdf)

## **Completion by Design**

*Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*

Completion by Design is a 5-year Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation initiative that works with community colleges to significantly increase completion and graduation rates for low-income students under age 26. Four selected community colleges will implement proven and effective practices that support every student, from the day they step onto campus, until the day they earn their degree or complete their credential. Completion by Design uses findings from previous initiatives, such as Achieving the Dream, to assist community colleges with interventions at key points where they often lose students. The project includes an online and searchable database loaded with resources.

<http://www.completionbydesign.org/>

## **Degree Completion Beyond Institutional Borders, Responding to the New Reality of Mobile and Nontraditional Learners**

*Center for American Progress/Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2010*

Researchers say that the institution-centered emphasis on the traditional credit hour as the basis for acknowledging academic achievement is increasingly misguided, given student mobility. This brief advocates for more acceptance of alternative methods that some colleges and organizations are using to award credit, from competency-based models to rigorous evaluation, and formal recognition of prior learning.

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/10/degree\\_completion\\_beyond\\_borders.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/10/degree_completion_beyond_borders.html)



## **The Degree Qualifications Profile**

*Lumina Foundation, 2011*

This document draws on more than a decade of widespread debate and effort, across all levels of U.S. higher education, to define expected learning outcomes that graduates need for work, citizenship, global participation, and life. Building from this work, this Degree Profile is deliberately offered as a “beta version” that will be further tested and refined. The long-term goal is to clearly define quality in American higher education and to develop new capacity throughout postsecondary education to ensure that students achieve the levels of learning they need and deserve.

[http://www.luminafoundation.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/02/The\\_Degree\\_Qualifications\\_Profile.pdf](http://www.luminafoundation.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/02/The_Degree_Qualifications_Profile.pdf)

## **Democracy’s Colleges: Call to Action Statement**

The American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, the Center for Community College Student Engagement, the League for Innovation, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development and Phi Theta Kappa signed this statement in 2010, committing to raise the number of community college students completing credentials or degrees by 50% by 2020.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Documents/calltoaction.pdf>

## **Democracy’s Colleges: The Evolution of the Community College in America American Association of Community Colleges, 2010**

American Association of Community Colleges, 2010

This policy brief was prepared for the White House Summit on Community Colleges that initiated a national conversation on college completion efforts. The 6-page document includes an overview of the community college movement and summarizes key issues facing community college leaders today.

[http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/whsummit/Documents/boggs\\_whsummitbrief.pdf](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/whsummit/Documents/boggs_whsummitbrief.pdf)

## **Discerning Learning: Colleges Find New Ways to Show What Students Know**

*Lumina Education Focus Magazine, 2011*

In the Winter 2011 magazine issue, the Lumina Foundation offers a host of ideas to help colleges define alternative ways to measure student learning. These alternative models can impact student completion rates, as they often help students earn credit faster. E-portfolios, competencies, learning outcomes, and other ideas are discussed.

<http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/focus/2011-01/>



## **Easy Come, EZ-GO A Federal Role in Removing Jurisdictional Impediments to College Education**

*Center for American Progress, 2010*

In this thought-provoking report, 3 researchers at the Institute for Higher Education Policy propose that the federal government seed an "educational zone" experiment aimed at deregulating higher education in 20 large metropolitan areas that sit at the crossroads of multiple states, knocking down barriers that prevent a "regional" approach to higher education. [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/10/easy\\_come\\_ez\\_go.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/10/easy_come_ez_go.html)

## **Engaging Adjunct and Full-Time Faculty in Student Success Innovation**

*Achieving the Dream/Public Agenda*

This publication is intended to be used as a tool that helps colleges design and implement effective faculty engagement strategies for student success. This tool utilizes the Achieving the Dream 5-Step Process for Increasing Student Success through Institutional Change. Section 1, comprised of the framework, principles and practices, is designed to help college leadership make strategic decisions about when and how to most constructively engage faculty as partners in the difficult work of institutional change. Because real stories and concrete examples are helpful for colleges as they plan or refine their own faculty engagement efforts, Section 2 offers a number of mini-cases highlighting faculty engagement.

<http://www.achievingthedream.org/Portal/Modules/974e179d-33ba-4d80-99d2-41ba453d32f7.asset>

## **Five Strategies to Help Low-Income Adults and Youth Attain Community College Credentials**

*Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success, 2010*

This brief outlines 5 strategies to improve credential attainment by adults and youth at community colleges. Streamlined education and training paths, bridge programs, flexible scheduling, program modularization, improved data collection, financial aid, and increased student support services are discussed.

<http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/Five-Strategies-to-Help-Low-Income-Adults-and-Youth-Attain-Community-College-Credentials-092710.pdf>

## **Giving Credit Where Credit is Due: Creating a Competency Based Qualifications Framework for Postsecondary Education and Training**

Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success (CLASP), 2011

This is a CLASP webinar on the report "Giving Credit Where Credit is Due: Creating a Competency Based Qualifications Framework for Postsecondary Education and Training." Speakers included: Marcus Kolb of the Lumina Foundation for Education, Dr. Rebecca Nickoli, of Ivy Tech Community College, Dr. Roy Swift of the American National Standards Institute, Dr. Keith Bird of the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, and Evelyn Ganzglass of CLASP. View the webinar recording, the full report, or the PowerPoint slides.

<http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/Giving-Credit.pdf>  
<http://www.clasp.org/postsecondary/pages?id=0020>



## **Graduated Success: Sustainable Opportunity Through One- and Two-Year Credentials**

*Dēmos, 2010*

There is now more evidence than ever before that one and two-year credentials, particularly in specific fields, can lead to economic prosperity. This evidence underscores the importance of degree completion, as much as the type of degree selected. It also emphasizes the importance of addressing barriers that impede students in completing one and two-year credentials.

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated\\_Success\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Graduated_Success_Demos.pdf)

## **Improving Student Learning Outcomes with Service Learning**

*American Association of Community Colleges, 2010*

This AACC research study of 13 grantee colleges and their experiences with student learning reveals that service learning can improve learning outcomes and increase retention of academic content. Faculty also felt that service learning activities motivated students to stay enrolled in college and demonstrated the real world application of knowledge to students.

[http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/horizons/Documents/slorb\\_jan2010.pdf](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/horizons/Documents/slorb_jan2010.pdf)

## **Inside the Completion Agenda: Challenges, Opportunities and Action**

*American Association of Community Colleges, 2011*

This video and presentation from the AACC annual convention examined Suffolk County Community College in New York and its work to help students complete their credentials and degrees. Strategies highlighted include: offering a freshman success seminar, scholarship support, internship placements for students, partnerships with regional healthcare providers, an early college program, late registration policies, and a project identifying students with 60+ credits finished who might qualify for a credential or degree with 9 or fewer additional credits.

<http://softconference.com/llc/player.asp?PVQ=HDME&fVQ=FIFFID&OcNff=wqU5GFM5uWUjRVo0QvFrupz5XYG4uWqMG4Dxfss0pXUQM9Gr47XW7ViqsvrMvGwxG>

## **Keeping Students Enrolled: How Community Colleges Are Boosting Financial Resources for Their Students**

*Dēmos, 2011*

Available financial aid covers only a fraction of what community college students pay for their education. To finance their studies, many enroll in school only part time or work more than 20 hours per week, strategies that increase their likelihood of dropping out. This report highlights strategies adopted by higher education institutions to increase the financial resources available to help students.

[http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/KeepingStudentsEnrolled\\_Demos.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/KeepingStudentsEnrolled_Demos.pdf)



## **Learning Communities for Students in Developmental Math: Impact Studies at Queensborough and Houston Community Colleges**

*The Learning Communities Demonstration, 2011*

Remedial math classes can be a major barrier to student completion. Both Queensborough College and Houston College offer learning communities to aid remedial math students at completing their course sequences and ultimately, finishing their credentials or degrees. At both colleges, students passed developmental math classes at higher rates after the learning community program was implemented. But neither college's learning communities program impacted persistence in college or cumulative credit earned.

[http://www.postsecondaryresearch.org/i/a/document/17075\\_LCMathBrief.pdf](http://www.postsecondaryresearch.org/i/a/document/17075_LCMathBrief.pdf)

## **Learning Counts**

*Council for Adult and Experiential Learning*

This website offers a wealth of resources for colleges, workforce organizations, employers and students related to prior learning assessment.

<http://www.learningcounts.org>

## **Low-Hanging Fruit**

*Insider Higher Ed, 2011*

Whether they called them "near-completers" or "ready adults" or "stop-outs," the educators and policy experts gathered for the Institute for Higher Education Policy meeting summarized in this article, tried to identify ways to help students complete their educations. Several strategies for improving college completion rates are discussed.

[http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/09/14/institute\\_for\\_higher\\_education\\_policy\\_summit\\_on\\_near\\_completers](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/09/14/institute_for_higher_education_policy_summit_on_near_completers)

## **Making Learning Outside the Classroom Count: CAP Explores Prior Learning Assessments**

*Center for American Progress, 2011*

This webinar recording features several education leaders discussing prior learning assessment (PLA). Council for Adult and Experiential Learning researchers looking at more than 62,000 students at 48 postsecondary institutions found that the "PLA effect" is significant: 56% of PLA students earn a postsecondary degree within 7 years, while only 21% of non-PLA students did. Among the participants was Joyce M. Judy, president of the Community College of Vermont. She described her institution, how prior learning assessment functions within the college, and the benefits derived by both student and institution.

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/09/pla\\_event.htm](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/09/pla_event.htm)



### **Minority Male Student Success Programs at Community Colleges**

*American Association of Community Colleges, 2010-present*

This helpful database lists dozens of community college programs around the country that are working to improve the success of minority male students in college. You can browse the database for ideas and submit a description of your college's program for inclusion.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/diversity/MinMaleStuSuccessProgs/Pages/Default.aspx>

### **Personal Attention Boosts College Success Rates**

*Community College Times, 2011*

In this article, Ellie Ashford reports on personalized services at community colleges that are helping students complete their education programs. Making students more aware of financial aid opportunities, utilizing learning community models, and eliminating bureaucratic barriers to graduation are among the strategies discussed.

### **Phi Theta Kappa Completion Toolkit – Administrator Guide**

*Phi Theta Kappa*

College administrators can use this helpful toolkit to work with students to support a college-wide completion pledge drive.

<http://www.cccompletioncorps.org/ccccorps/ptk/toolkit>

### **Phi Theta Kappa Completion Toolkit – Call to Action in Support of Students**

*Phi Theta Kappa*

A poster and signature sheets are available for colleges to use for their own signature wall and completion initiatives.

<http://www.cccompletioncorps.org/ccccorps/ptk/toolkit>

### **Phi Theta Kappa Completion Toolkit – Posters**

*Phi Theta Kappa*

These posters can be used to promote your college's completion signature campaign to students, faculty and staff.

<http://www.cccompletioncorps.org/ccccorps/ptk/toolkit>

### **Phi Theta Kappa Completion Toolkit – Student Guide**

*Phi Theta Kappa*

Student leaders will find this hands-on guide useful when designing a college completion pledge drive initiative.

<http://www.cccompletioncorps.org/ccccorps/ptk/toolkit>



## **Promoting Student Success in Community College and Beyond**

*MDRC, 2005*

In this research report, MDRC evaluated community college efforts to increase student persistence and achievement through the Opening Doors Demonstration project. The programs evaluated used curricular reform, enhanced student services, and financial aid to help students stay in college and reach their achievement goals.

<http://www.mdrc.org/publications/409/overview.html>

## **Rebalancing the Mission: The Community College Completion Challenge**

*American Association of Community Colleges, 2010*

This policy brief addresses what it means for community colleges to embrace completion in the same way that they have historically embraced access. Because community colleges are, first and foremost, oriented toward their communities, they may need to modify their traditional ways of fulfilling their individual missions, specifically in three areas: course enrollment, course completion, and certificate and degree completion.

## **Reinvigorating the Economy: Renewing Our Commitment to Access, Excellence, and Student Success**

*Association of Community College Trustees*

This publication highlights how community colleges are vital to rebuilding a thriving US economy. Quotes from business and college leaders highlight the value of community colleges and their growing prominence in the United States, and even around the world.

<http://www.cccompletioncorps.org/ccccorps/sites/default/files/pdfs/acct-reinvigorating-the-economy.pdf>

## **The Road Ahead: A Look at Trends in the Educational Attainment of Community College Students**

*American Association of Community Colleges, 2011*

This research policy brief found that the percentage of degrees and certificates awarded grew at twice the rate of enrollment between 1989 and 2010. Students earned 127% more credentials, even while enrollment at community colleges increased by 65%. The growth in achievement was particularly pronounced among minority groups. Hispanic students, earned more than four times the number of credentials at the same time that their numbers doubled. Credential attainment among African-American students increased 283% during the same time period.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/Briefs/Pages/pb09292011.aspx>



## **The Shapeless River: Does a Lack of Structure Inhibit Students' Progress at Community College?**

*Community College Research Center, Columbia University, 2011*

A structure hypothesis argues that community college students are more likely to succeed when offered a highly structured program of study that makes clear the path to completion and reduces bureaucratic barriers. This report examines the decision-making processes that students must go through to successfully navigate college and the psychological impacts of making these decisions in a low-structure context. The author reviews several methods that colleges can consider to provide students with a more structured, easier to navigate college experience, including revised curriculum design and improved access to information.

<http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/101%20Scott%20Clayton%202011.pdf>

## **Stepping Stones to a Degree: The Impact of Enrollment Pathways and Milestones on Older Community College Student Outcomes**

*Community College Research Center, Columbia University, 2006*

Using data on 35,000 first-time students in Florida community colleges, this research brief explores the factors impacting academic outcomes of traditional and older students. The authors specifically focus on student outcomes from enrollment in developmental course pathways and earned-credit milestones (i.e., completing 20 credits or 50% of a program). Findings suggest that students of different age groups are impacted differently by enrollment pathways and credits earned, and the authors note ways support services can take these differences into account.

<http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/59%20Calcagno%20October%202006.pdf>

## **Strategies for Increasing Credential Attainment: Getting Credit for What You Already Know**

*U.S. Department of Labor, 2011*

This webinar provides technical assistance to the workforce system and its education partners on meeting the goal to increase by 10% the rate of credential attainment of public workforce program participants. The webinar is the second in a series on strategies for increasing credential attainment and focuses on the practice of awarding credit for prior learning as a way to accelerate credential attainment for adults.

<https://www.workforce3one.org/view/5001112552635772635/info>



## **Strategies for Increasing Credential Attainment Through the Public Workforce System**

*U.S. Department of Labor, 2011*

This webinar provides an overview of two strategies that have proven effective for increasing credential attainment among low-skilled youth and adults. Integrated education and training, as well as “chunking” curricula into sub-associate degree certificates can be helpful. Kathy Cooper, Director of Adult Education from Washington State presented the I-BEST model and Mimi Maduro, Director of Oregon’s Statewide Career Pathways Initiative, discussed the career pathway certificates. Slides from their presentations are available.

<https://www.workforce3one.org/view/2001108746045849165/info>

## **Time is the Enemy**

*Complete College America, 2011*

This 240-page report examines the reasons why students don’t complete credentials or degrees at community colleges. A series of extensive state profiles are offered that provide detailed data and suggestions for improvement for colleges and state policy leaders. Data gaps in tracking part-time students are painfully obvious – and the report is a call to action for community colleges and policy makers seeking to raise completion rates.

[http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time\\_Is\\_the\\_Enemy.pdf](http://www.completecollege.org/docs/Time_Is_the_Enemy.pdf)

## **Time to Completion: Adult Students**

*Lumina Foundation for Education*

This essay discusses strategies to help adult students complete college degrees or certificates. Enabling students to transfer credit, offering financial supports, ensuring programs are relevant to careers, providing basic and developmental education, and improving state governance policies can help. The essay offers several links to additional resources and cites program examples from colleges around the country.

<http://www.collegeproductivity.org/AdultStudent>

## **To Raise College-Completion Rates, Deal With Costs and Transfer Policies, Report Suggests**

*Chronicle of Higher Education, 2011*

This article summarizes the findings of a new study about college completion by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. The students most at risk of not finishing a degree or credential are those who begin their education at a two-year institution, usually out of financial necessity, says the report.

<http://chronicle.com/article/To-Raise-College-Completion/128090/>



### **Toward a New Understanding of Non-Academic Student Support: Four Mechanisms Encouraging Positive Student Outcomes in the Community College**

*Community College Research Center, Columbia University, 2011*

Success in college unquestionably requires the academic skills and knowledge to complete rigorous coursework. This report argues that the non-academic challenges of postsecondary education, such as navigating bureaucratic hurdles and building new interpersonal relationships, can also be significant barriers to success. The author reviews existing research on support services available to students, focusing on the major processes within commonly implemented programs that help students cope with non-academic stressors.

<http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/sites/default/files/119%20Karp%202011.pdf>

### **The Transformation of Higher Education through Prior Learning Assessment**

*Change, 2011*

This article in *Change* magazine, discusses why higher education needs to take a closer look at prior learning assessment. The author notes that to understand the importance of portable credit, educators must understand two key realities. Most students don't start and finish at the same college and much learning takes place outside of classrooms. Sixty-five percent of postsecondary learning, by spending, does not happen through colleges and universities, but through workplaces and other trainings. The author presents several examples of prior learning assessment at colleges and builds the case for why colleges should utilize prior learning assessment more frequently.

<http://www.changemag.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/2011/September-October%202011/transformation-full.html>

### **Transforming Community College to Accelerate Success for Low-Income Students**

*Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Columbia University, 2009-present*

This document summarizes CCRC research begun in May 2009 to inform the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Success initiative, which aims to double the number of low-income students who by age 26 earn a postsecondary credential degree or certificate. The goal is to build a rigorous base of research knowledge on strategies for accelerating progression and increasing success among low-income young adult students, many of whom attend community colleges. The CCRC recently released a set of working papers that gather and synthesize the most valuable research evidence available on strategies for improving community college student success. CCRC is also conducting 7 new studies described in this document.

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Collection.asp?cid=64>



## **Underserved Students Who Earn Credit through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Have Higher Degree Completion Rates and Shorter Time-to-Degree**

*Council on Adult and Experiential Learning, 2011*

In 2010, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) released a report examining data from 62,475 adult students at 48 colleges and universities over 7 years and prior learning assessment (PLA) impacts. In this research brief, CAEL showcases the findings by race/ethnicity and income. The data show that black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and low income students with PLA credits have better academic outcomes than similar students without PLA credits. The positive findings for low-income, black non-Hispanic and Hispanic students suggest that awarding college credit for significant life learning could be an effective way to accelerate degree completion, while lowering the cost, for underserved student populations.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/html/clep/docs/CAEL-report-april2011.pdf>

## **Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST): New Evidence of Effectiveness**

*Community College Research Center, Columbia University, 2010*

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges developed the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), pairing a basic skills instructor with an occupational instructor team to teach occupational courses with integrated basic skills content. Students receive college-level credit for the occupational coursework. Evaluation results suggest this model is effective at improving college completion rates. Researchers also examined two labor market outcomes: the change in wages for those who were employed both before and after program enrollment, and the change in the number of hours worked after leaving the program.

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=805>

## **Why College Completion?**

*The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*

This short online essay summarizes the Foundation's commitment to improving postsecondary higher education. Improving postsecondary performance and alternative educational delivery models, empowering student success, scholarship programs, advocating for college completion support alongside stakeholders, and building knowledge to support colleges as they work to raise completion rates are discussed.

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/postsecondaryeducation/Pages/why-college-completion.aspx>

## **Partners in the College Completion Challenge**

The Community College Completion Challenge, [www.cccompletionchallenge.org](http://www.cccompletionchallenge.org)

American Association of Community Colleges, [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)

Association of Community College Trustees, [www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org)

The Center for Community College Student Engagement, [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org)

League for Innovation in the Community College, [www.league.org](http://www.league.org)

National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, [www.nisod.org](http://www.nisod.org)

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, [www.ptk.org](http://www.ptk.org)



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

# Completion Challenge Video Playlist

AACC -

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL04718EC1DD92C92A&v=23Of\\_OHMWIk&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL04718EC1DD92C92A&v=23Of_OHMWIk&feature=player_embedded)

AACC -

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL61C1209961806A55&v=IADKgQqDrJQ&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL61C1209961806A55&v=IADKgQqDrJQ&feature=player_embedded)

AACC - <http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/c/322E3F5DABC9A2C4/1/EewGXtC1X0M>

AACC - <http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/c/322E3F5DABC9A2C4/0/BrPcHYyLfic>

AACC - <http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/c/322E3F5DABC9A2C4/2/Wd7bYWR9lto>

AACC - <http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/c/322E3F5DABC9A2C4/3/8qSsyVlOnew>

AACC - <http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/u/37/nPFLyKKRwho>

AACC - <http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/u/38/Um2EshrE6lA>

AACC/Phi Theta Kappa - <http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/u/40/0hKejERY0CQ>

AACC - [http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/u/41/KhN3EyU\\_txQ](http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/u/41/KhN3EyU_txQ)

AACC - <http://www.youtube.com/user/CommunityColleges#p/u/42/yhCDbZxIXLo>

AACC -

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL322E3F5DABC9A2C4&v=BrPcHYyLfic&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL322E3F5DABC9A2C4&v=BrPcHYyLfic&feature=player_embedded)

AACC -

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL12E69AEE4311F36B&v=VCrOe5X73n4&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL12E69AEE4311F36B&v=VCrOe5X73n4&feature=player_embedded)

AACC – Plus 50 Completion Strategy -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPlus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/13/4f--DCysyYY>



AACC Plus 50 – Completion Strategy Tips – Joliet Junior College -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/0/9GLivIcONfM>

PTK - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/1/MQw94c3if5A>

PTK - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/2/aQIP5uJuc6M>

PTK - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/3/AKH2qJikgDo>

PTK - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/4/ZrGctPIGpnU>

PTK - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/5/nhHVryHZSME>

PTK - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/6/woUDHKklaAY>

PTK - [http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/12/wX\\_BjjYg\\_0c](http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/12/wX_BjjYg_0c)

PTK - <http://www.youtube.com/user/phithetakappa?feature=chclk#p/u/0/9PJFA5mcRgg>

PTK - <http://www.youtube.com/user/phithetakappa?feature=chclk#p/u/21/l8wFlvIVwpo>

PTK = <http://www.youtube.com/user/phithetakappa?feature=chclk#p/u/35/CkkaqG9rHPs>

PTK/League for Innovation -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/7/fZN1d1B9glA>

PTK/League for Innovation -

[http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/8/\\_yNzYXnf7hs](http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/8/_yNzYXnf7hs)

PTK/League for Innovation -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/9/Clz3g23iEFo>

PTK/League for Innovation -

[http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/10/\\_4qTDrYYsoM](http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/10/_4qTDrYYsoM)

PTK/AACC -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/11/7lm1Awdt-Tw>

ISKME -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/14/j4otSmUBDlc>



ISKME -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPplus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/15/7vxQLskaBeM>

ISKME - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPplus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/16/xw7EFml-wMk>

ISKME - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPplus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/17/fYJfDhWxJP8>

ISKME - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQB7vqDjTWg>

ISKME - <http://www.youtube.com/user/ISKME#p/a/0E87DDCA3EABF8C6/2/Gz-590xpbl8>

ISKME - [http://www.youtube.com/user/ISKME#p/a/FBC964ECD28E851E/1/FU8p0FqH\\_s8](http://www.youtube.com/user/ISKME#p/a/FBC964ECD28E851E/1/FU8p0FqH_s8)

ISKME - <http://www.youtube.com/user/ISKME#p/c/FBC964ECD28E851E/10/2wnkPhOzzQI>

ISKME/National League of Cities -

<http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPplus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/18/Zdax7gv8A1k>

ACCT - <http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPplus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/19/NPqPNsYjI8Y>

ACCT -

[http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPplus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/20/nU\\_Ft\\_TtwDw](http://www.youtube.com/user/AACCPplus50Initiative#p/c/8AF6477DF043D1B8/20/nU_Ft_TtwDw)

Campus Progress - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHu9bdAmifw>

Harper College - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpEUxKP2QxA>

Tallahassee Community College -

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pMx0tU6JgQ&feature=player\\_embedded#!](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pMx0tU6JgQ&feature=player_embedded#!)

Sinclair Community College -

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKZX8QVZ1AA&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKZX8QVZ1AA&feature=player_embedded)

CSCC Completion Initiative - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHu9bdAmifw>

Other Video Resources -

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Pages/multimedia.aspx>



**SAMPLE FILL-IN-THE-BLANK NEWS RELEASE – USE TO PROMOTE COLLEGE COMPLETION EFFORTS TO THE COMMUNITY, SHOWCASE STEPS THE COLLEGE IS TAKING TO HELP STUDENTS**

**XYZ COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOINS NATIONAL COMPLETION CHALLENGE, WORKS TO RAISE NUMBER OF STUDENTS FINISHING CREDENTIALS AND DEGREES**

*Staff, faculty & students rally to make campus-wide changes that help students succeed*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

**YOUR TOWN, STATE** – XYZ Community College is taking on a challenge – the battle to raise the number of students finishing degrees and other credentials. It’s part of a national initiative, known as the College Completion Challenge. It’s happening all over the country on community college campuses, as staff, faculty and students come together to help students achieve their dreams.

At XYZ Community College, leaders say they are XYZ – discuss steps being taken to support completion efforts at the college, changes being made, services being improved.

“Insert quote expressing support for completion efforts at the college,” said XYZ Community College president. “Insert quote here about the positive impact raising the completion rate will bring to students, or the community at large, or employers in the community.”

Today’s workers need up-to-date skills to get jobs. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that 30 percent of the nation’s fastest-growing occupations will be filled by people who have a postsecondary education credential.

By 2018, 63% of all jobs will require at least some postsecondary education. Employers will need 22 million new workers with postsecondary credentials. But if current college completion rates remain the same, employers will be short 3 million workers by 2018.

“Helping students complete their college educations – whether that means a degree or a credential – is part of our response to President Obama’s ambitious agenda for America to once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020,” said Dr. Walter G. Bumphus, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

In 2010, AACC joined five other national organizations to sign a public pledge to promote the development and implementation of policies, practices, and institutional cultures that will produce 50 percent more students with high quality degrees and certificates by 2020.

“Without degrees and credentials, the workers of tomorrow will be shut out from hiring. Community colleges can help them complete their educations, attain credentials and degrees that are in demand, and get them on the road to prosperity,” said Bumphus.

“Insert quote here expressing support for the completion initiative from a student with a compelling personal story,” said [First Name] [Last Name], Age. Last Name was in XYZ situation that made it difficult to complete college. (eg. single parent, struggling financially, having a difficult time finishing college). “Insert a follow-up quote expressing the student’s hopes for completing a credential or degree, hopes for employment, the future.”

**About XYZ Community College**

Insert brief college boilerplate statement here outlining enrollment, location and signature programs for the college. List your college website address.

**About the College Completion Challenge**

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) joined with other leading education organizations to launch the College Completion Challenge in 2010 that aims to increase by 50% the number of community college students completing a degree or credential over the next ten years - to 5 million students by the year 2020. More information is available at <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/completionchallenge/Pages/default.aspx>

**Media contact:** Name, Title, College XYZ, Phone number, Email address

###

The College Completion Challenge Toolkit – Boilerplate news release to use if your college is holding a College Completion event – e.g. a wall signing by students, a pledge signing by faculty and administrators, unveiling a number of pledges for completion, etc.

**SAMPLE FILL-IN-THE-BLANK NEWS RELEASE – TO USE TO PROMOTE MEDIA COVERAGE**

**TAKING THE CHALLENGE: XYZ COLLEGE HOLDS COMPLETION SIGNING/PLEDGING EVENT**  
*Students, Community Leaders, Employers and Media Invited to Witness XYZ*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

PHOTO/VIDEO OPPORTUNITY

**YOUR TOWN, STATE** – XYZ Community College is taking on a challenge – the battle to raise the number of students finishing degrees and other credentials. It's part of a national effort, known as the College Completion Challenge. It's happening all over the country on community college campuses, as staff, faculty and students pledge to raise by 50% the number of students completing credentials or degrees over the next ten years.

Next week, the college is holding a **Completion Event Title** on **Date** from **Start Time-End Time** to showcase **XYZ activity supporting college completion efforts**.

Today's workers need up-to-date skills to get jobs. By 2018, 63% of all jobs will require at least some postsecondary education, and researchers say employers will be short 3 million workers. Community colleges are revving up their campuses, re-tooling programs, improving student support, and rising to meet this challenge.

**\*\* MEDIA INVITED TO ATTEND \*\***

**WHO:** XYZ Completion Event/Signing Event at XYZ Community College

**WHAT:** Engaging and exciting XYZ Completion Activity, Profile speakers, What will happen at the event in 1-2 sentences

**WHERE:** XYZ Community College, Street address

**WHEN:** Date, Start Time-End Time

**WHY:** The college **Completion Event/Signing Event** aims to inspire students, staff and faculty to reach for the completion goal line and raise the number of graduates.

**PHOTO/VIDEO OPPORTUNITY:** As part of the event, media will be able to photograph and film

XYZ Completion Activity (signing of a wall, unveiling of number of pledges, signing of a document). Faculty, staff and students will be available for interviews.

**About XYZ Community College**

Insert brief college boilerplate statement here outlining enrollment, location and signature programs for the college. List your college website address.

**About the College Completion Challenge**

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