Non-traditional No More: Policy Solutions for Adult Learners: Academic Affairs

WICHE-facilitated Meeting
Colorado Department of Higher Education
June 18, 2008
Goals of the Day

• Identify what Colorado wants to accomplish with respect to Academic Affairs
• Identify the power centers and who is responsible for the target areas
• Prioritize the goals
• Assign next steps and agree on a timeline
New Way of Thinking

• Change in mindset
• Expand thinking
• New and creative ways to promote and encourage student success
Background
Why Target Adult Students?

• International competition and changing global economy
• Increased earnings
Differences in College Attainment (Associate and Higher) Between Younger and Older Adults—U.S. and OECD Countries, 2005

Differences in College Attainment (Associate and Higher) Between Younger and Older Adults—U.S., 2005

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey (ACS)
Changing Global Economy

• “At the military and political level, we still live in a unipolar world. But along every other dimension – industrial, financial, social, cultural – the distribution of power is shifting, moving away from American dominance.”

Source: Newsweek, May 12, 2008
Increased Earnings

• Among adults aged 18-64, those who earn an associate’s degree can expect, on average, over $7,200 more in annual earnings than those who do not.

Distance and Online Learning

- Almost 3.5 million students were taking at least one online course during the fall 2006 term; a nearly 10 percent increase over the number reported the previous year.
- The 9.7 percent growth rate for online enrollments far exceeds the 1.5 percent growth of the overall higher education student population.
- Nearly twenty percent of all U.S. higher education students were taking at least one online course in the fall of 2006.

Source: Sloan-C, Online Nation; Five Years of Growth in Online Learning, 2007
What About Colorado?
Colorado’s Young Adults (25-34) Completed College

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey (ACS)
Colorado’s Adults (25-64) Completed College

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey (ACS)
Colorado’s Adults (25-64) Some College/No Degree

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey (ACS)
Colorado’s Adults (25-64)
High School Diploma/No College

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<td>22.7</td>
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey (ACS)
Colorado’s Adults (25-64)
Less Than High School Diploma

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey (ACS)
Change in Occupations Requiring Postsecondary Degree: 2002-2012

Colorado’s Working-Age Adults

3,106,849 working-age adults (2005)

- 1,879,202 (60.5 percent) have not completed either an associate’s or bachelor’s degree.
- 740,523 (23.8 percent) have completed some college, but no degree.
- 423,450 (13.6 percent) are living in families whose combined incomes are less than a living wage (twice the poverty level).

Topics of Concern
Topics of Concern – Getting In

• Recruitment
• Admissions
• Residency
• Placement/Competency Exams/Prior Learning Assessment
• Credit/Experiential Credit
Topics of Concern – While You’re There

- Remediation
- Class/Program/Degree Scheduling
- Mode of Delivery/Integrating Distance Learning into Academics
- Advising
- Faculty Development (Targeted to Adult Learners)
Topics of Concern – Getting Out

• Transfer/Articulation

• Degree Requirements
  – Last 30 Hours to be Completed on Home Campus
  – Unpaid Internships
Identifying the Problem(s)
Gaps Identified in the Work Plan

• An educational process (including curriculum, course redesign, and policies) that does not incentivize adult learner recruitment back to the system or improve retention and completion rates

• A culture that still thinks about “weeding out” unsuccessful adult learners rather than “helping ensure success”
  – Requires rethinking the definitions around success for the non-traditional adult student
Gaps Identified in the Work Plan

• Operating in a constrained fiscal environment
• Operating in a local control state
Problem Identification

• Hypothetical Situation and Discussion
### Problem Identification

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Problem Identification

• Hypothetical Situation - Websites
Next Steps and Timeline
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