

***STATE POLICIES TO
ACHIEVE THE DREAM IN
FIVE STATES:***
**AN AUDIT OF STATE POLICIES
TO AID STUDENT ACCESS TO
AND SUCCESS IN
COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN
THE FIRST FIVE
ACHIEVING THE DREAM
STATES**

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ABSTRACT

In 2003, the Lumina Foundation for Education launched a major initiative, “Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count,” to increase student success at community colleges. The initiative focuses on colleges with high enrollments of low-income students and students of color. In the first round, 27 colleges in five states were selected. The initiative aims to help more students succeed, while maintaining access to community college for groups that traditionally have faced barriers. A key means to improve the performance of colleges is through enhancement of their capacities to gather, analyze, and act on data on student outcomes, including data on students grouped by race, income, age, sex, and other characteristics.

From the beginning, a central component of this effort has been state policy. In each of the states where Achieving the Dream colleges are located, the initiative is working with a lead organization (typically the state community college system office or state association of community colleges) to develop policies that will enhance student success.

To help guide that policy effort, the Lumina Foundation commissioned an audit of state policy affecting access to, and success in, community colleges. An in-depth analysis was to be conducted of the initial five Achieving the Dream states (New Mexico, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia), to be supplemented later by a survey of all 50 states. This report summarizes that initial in-depth analysis of the first five Achieving the Dream states.

The report analyzes state policies with regard to student access, student success, and performance accountability, with particular focus on minority and low-income students. In the case of access, the report examines what policies states have in place with regard to open door admissions, tuition, student aid, outreach to potential students, a comprehensive curriculum, and convenient access. The success policies the report analyzes pertain to remediation, academic counseling and guidance, non-academic guidance and support, transfer assistance, baccalaureate provision, noncredit to credit articulation, and workforce and economic development. Finally, with regard to performance accountability, the report examines the indicators used by the state, how data are collected by the state, and how the data are used by the state and the community colleges to determine funding and shape how colleges act. Besides describing the policies in place, the report also summarizes the reactions of those interviewed to those policies. Moreover, it details suggestions for future directions for state policy toward community college student access and success.

To secure information on what policies the states have and how well they are working, we conducted many interviews and reviewed the written academic and non-academic literature on these subjects. We also attended the Policy Listening Tour meetings in each of the states, conducted by the Futures Project, in order to observe the discussions and informally converse with policymakers. Our interviews were conducted over the telephone and averaged twelve in each state. We interviewed officials of the state agencies coordinating the community colleges, the governor’s educational advisor, state legislators or staff members from both houses, the head of the state community college association (if one existed), the presidents or top officials of three or four community colleges (differing in degree of urbanicity and area of the state), and representatives of community organizations representing the African American, Latino, and low-income communities in each state.

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CHAPTER ONE

FIVE STATES OF POLICY: A SUMMARY¹

In 2003, the Lumina Foundation for Education launched a major initiative, “Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count,” to increase student success at community colleges. The initiative focuses on colleges with high enrollments of low-income students and students of color. In the first round, 27 colleges in five states were selected.

The initiative aims to help more students succeed, while maintaining access to community college for groups that traditionally have faced barriers. A key means to improve the performance of colleges is through enhancement of their capacities to gather, analyze, and act on data on student outcomes, including data on students grouped by race, income, age, sex, and other characteristics.

From the beginning, a central component of this effort has been state policy. In each of the states where Achieving the Dream colleges are located, the initiative is working with a lead organization (typically the state community college system office or state association of community colleges) to develop policies that will enhance student success.

To help guide that policy effort, the Lumina Foundation commissioned an audit of state policy affecting access to, and success in, community colleges. An indepth analysis was to be conducted of the initial five Achieving the Dream states (New Mexico, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia), to be supplemented later by a survey of all 50 states. This report describes that initial indepth analysis of the first five Achieving the Dream states.

In those five states, we have examined what state policies are in place addressing issues of access to and success in the community college for minority and low-income students and have also solicited the views of policymakers, institutional officials, and community group leaders on how well those policies have worked and what future directions policies should take. To secure this information, we conducted many interviews in all five states and reviewed the academic and non-academic literature relevant subjects.

The following sections lay out in detail the policies reviewed and our research methods. We then move to an analysis of our findings. We detail the areas in which the five states demonstrate a similar pattern of policy activity (or inactivity) and the areas where they go in different directions. We conclude by recommending future policy directions for the states.

THE POLICIES EXAMINED

To identify the important state policies shaping student access and success, we solicited the opinions of key policy actors and observers² and reviewed the research and policy literature on community colleges and higher education more generally. We examined reports by leading research and policy organizations,³ publications by the lead state agencies dealing with community colleges in the five initial Achieving the Dream states, and journals and books dealing with community colleges and higher education.

After several iterations what emerged was a policy taxonomy that is detailed in this chapter's Appendix.

Access Policies

Despite the huge growth in higher education in the United States over the last 100 years, large differences in college access still remain, particularly by race and income. For example, among 1992 high school graduates, 75% had enrolled in some form of postsecondary education by the year 2000. However, the figures for Hispanics, Native Americans, and those in the bottom quartile in socioeconomic status (SES) in the eighth grade were only 70%, 66%, and 52%, respectively (Ingels, Curtin, Kaufman, Alt, & Chen, 2002: 21).⁴

With regard to access, we have looked at state policies addressing student admissions, tuition, student financial aid, outreach programs, provisions for a comprehensive curriculum, and facilitation of access at distant locations and nontraditional times.

Admissions policy is of interest because, while community colleges are open door in ethos, this policy is under pressure as colleges face both increasing enrollment demand and more stingy state and local government funding (Cavanaugh, 2003; Hebel, 2004). Moreover, the increasing number of undocumented students raises important questions for an institution committed to access for the disadvantaged.

Tuition and financial aid are of immediate concern given that both significantly affect whether students go to college (Heller, 1999; St. John, 1991). In the case of tuition, we have examined not only its average level but also whether a state has policies extending instate tuition to undocumented immigrants.

In the case of financial aid, we have analyzed the extent of need-based aid available (particularly in comparison to merit-based aid) and whether states have any substantial programs specifically for minority students. Furthermore, we have examined whether undocumented and part-time students are eligible for state aid. Part-time students are of interest here because so many low-income and minority students attend college part time. Hence, we have looked at whether states have student aid programs specifically for part-timers, rather than simply making them eligible for general aid programs.

Because outreach is so important for low-income and minority students, we have looked for state support of programs to encourage interest in college on the part of minority and low-income students. We have particularly investigated whether states fund early intervention programs similar to the federal Talent Search and GEAR UP programs and authorize and fund dual-enrollment programs allowing high school students to take college-level courses and get high school credit for them (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; Karp, Bailey, Hughes, & Fermin, 2004, 2005; Perna & Swail, 2002).

Provisions for an accessible curriculum are of interest because many low-income and minority students are attracted to higher education by the availability of occupational and adult education programs (Grubb, Badway, & Bell, 2003; Prince & Jenkins, 2005). Hence, we have investigated whether these curricular options are mandated and financed by the states.

Finally, because minority and low-income students are more place and time bound (Choy & Ottinger, 1998: 51), we have sought to determine whether states have encouraged community colleges to establish satellite campuses, schedule courses at nontraditional times, offer distance education, or offer short-term courses or fractional credit.

Success Policies

Success within the community college remains an issue because many community college entrants leave higher education without a degree, with this number particularly great for low-income and minority students. For example, in the Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Survey (BPS:96) of first-time students entering college in 1995-96, 47% of those entering public two-year colleges had left higher education by June 2001 without a degree. But the figures for non-Hispanic Blacks, Latinos, and those with parents who had a high school degree or less were even higher: 61%, 52%, and 52%, respectively (Berkner, He, & Cataldi, 2002: 12, 61).⁵

With regard to success, we examined state policies involving remedial education, academic and non-academic counseling and guidance, transfer to four-year colleges, provision of the baccalaureate degree at community colleges, noncredit to credit articulation, and workforce and economic development.

Remedial education (also called developmental education) is crucial because so many low-income and minority students come into college with inadequate academic skills (Parsad & Lewis, 2003). But what state policies ensure that students will receive it, particularly in high quality form? As part of this analysis, we have looked at state policies affecting such factors as alignment of high school exit and college readiness requirements and mandatory testing and placement at college entry.

Academic and non-academic counseling and guidance have been found to have significant impacts on college persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005: 404-406). But these are also practices that are easy for community colleges to skim on, as they face cost pressures from

other areas. Hence, we have examined what kind of support – financial and programmatic – states provide for community college counseling and guidance programs.

Transfer to the four-year college has become increasingly important as more students are encouraged to attain a baccalaureate degree but it has also become more difficult to do so. Low-income and minority students are increasingly priced out of four-year colleges and states increasingly encourage baccalaureate aspirants to start at community colleges because it is cheaper for the states (Robertson, 2005; Wellman, 2002). We therefore have investigated the ways in which state policies aim to make transfer more likely and friction-free.

Baccalaureate provision at community colleges – either by community colleges themselves or by universities through centers at community colleges – has become increasingly attractive, particularly in response to the needs of place-bound students, labor market shortages, and cost-pressures on state governments (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005). Still, this movement is very new, so we have investigated the degree to which it is receiving state support and guidance.

Noncredit to credit articulation has become increasingly of interest with heightening awareness that many low-income and minority people enter the community college through the noncredit side, whether through English as a second language, adult basic education, high school equivalency (GED), or other such programs. But if they are to find a secure pathway to economic advancement, such noncredit entrants need to find their way to the credit side of the curriculum, where the most remunerative credentials are to be found (Grubb et al., 2003; Prince & Jenkins, 2005). Hence, it becomes important to see what state policies are available to foster this transition from noncredit to credit education.

Finally, because minority and low-income students must find jobs, it is important not only that they get trained but that remunerative jobs be available. Hence, the role state policy plays in aiding community colleges both to train workers and create new jobs is of interest (Dougherty & Bakia, 1999).

Performance Accountability

Performance accountability spans both access and success. States are increasingly using measures of community college performance in facilitating both student access and student success as ways of monitoring and rewarding colleges. But to effectively serve the goals of equality of access and success, the right measures must be used, particularly ones that directly address equality for minority and low-income students. Moreover, there must also be means to ensure that state policymakers and local community college officials actually respond to those performance outcome indicators (Dougherty & Hong, 2005; in press).

Therefore, we have examined state performance accountability policies, analyzing what measures the states collect and publicize and how these data guide policy making by state government bodies and programmatic efforts by community colleges themselves. In the case of state government, we have analyzed whether state appropriations to community colleges are allocated on the basis of institutional performance (whether in the form of performance funding or budgeting) and whether state bodies use performance outcomes to devise new access and success policies. In the case of the community colleges themselves, we have also been interested

in determining whether they use data on their performance to make changes in their own institutional practices affecting student access and success.

RESEARCH METHODS

To secure information on what policies the states have and how well they are working, we conducted many interviews and reviewed the written academic and non-academic literature on these subjects. We also attended the Policy Listening Tour meetings in each of the states, conducted by the Futures Project, in order to observe discussions among community college policymakers and informally converse with them.

The written academic and non-academic sources included research and policy publications issued by national and regional organizations and state agencies and articles in newspapers in the states. The organizations were the same as those that we reviewed when creating the policy taxonomy (see above).

Our interviews were conducted over the telephone and averaged twelve in each state. We interviewed officials of the state agencies coordinating the community colleges, the governor's educational advisor, state legislators or staff members from both houses, the head of the state community college association (if one existed), the presidents or top officials of three or four community colleges (differing in degree of urbanicity and area of the state),⁶ and representatives of community organizations representing the African American, Latino, and low-income communities in each state. The last set of interviews were of some importance to us because we hoped that the community organizations would shed light on how well the state access and success policies were working from the perspective of their intended beneficiaries. However, we sometimes found it difficult to secure interviews with members of these organizations. A major reason is that often they do not feel they know much about or have much contact with the community colleges. This was particularly striking in the case of organizations, such as ACORN, that represent low-income communities. This difficulty – particularly if it is founded in a belief (mistaken in our view) that community colleges are not of great importance to their communities – is something that policymakers need to carefully ponder.

VARIATIONS IN STATE ACTIVITY ACROSS POLICY AREAS

Access Policies

We have looked at state policies affecting institutional practices with regard to access in these areas: admissions, tuition, student financial aid, outreach programs, accessible curriculum, and access at distant locations and nontraditional times. However, we begin by analyzing the state's degree of public commitment to increasing student access.

Public Commitment to Increasing Student Access

All five of the first-round Achieving the Dream states have made public commitments to expanding access to community college. However, the states differ in how formal these commitments are. For example, is their commitment instantiated in formal plans and mission statements (Texas and Virginia), public statements of a less formal nature (Florida and New Mexico), or programs addressing the needs specifically of low-income and minority students such as need-based aid or minority mentoring programs (all five of the states)? Moreover, the states differ in whether they explicitly set targets for increased access for minority and low-income students. Only Texas has set specific targets for increased access by minority students (Latinos and blacks), and none of the states has set targets for low-income students.

Admissions

Open door admissions have been one of the hallmarks of the community college, as witness canonical references to the "Open Door College." What role has state policy played in creating and maintaining this distinctive unselectivity in admissions in the face of enrollment and cost pressures?

All but one state (New Mexico) has statutory language stating that the community college is an open door institution: that is, open to all high school graduates and even to students who do not have a high school degree. However, this typically does not mean that all parts of the community college are open. To enter a degree program, particularly an associate degree program, students usually have to have a high school diploma: either a regular diploma or a GED (which they can earn at the community college). Moreover, credit programs require a certain level of academic proficiency as determined by college placement exams. Finally, some programs – such as nursing – have additional academic proficiency requirements of their own.

Even if the open door is statutorily open, there is some question about whether colleges have informally narrowed it when overwhelmed by enrollments. Due to budgetary stringencies, they have not offered all the sections that students demand.

A key consideration for the open door is the eligibility of undocumented students for admission. At this point, only two states (Texas and New Mexico) have legislated that undocumented students are eligible. However, legislation to do so has failed in the other three states, and in one of them (Virginia), the Attorney General issued an opinion stating that colleges should not admit undocumented students and the Legislature passed (though the governor vetoed) legislation prohibiting their admission. However, in all three of these states (Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida), community colleges have been allowed to admit undocumented students at their discretion, with the North Carolina Community College System issuing a regulation making this discretion explicit (Biswas, 2005; Martz, 2002; Miller, 2005; North Carolina Community College System, 2004). If the political climate changes, these three states may wish to revisit the issue of explicitly allowing undocumented immigrants access to the community college so that it is not left to institutional discretion.

Tuition

As both observation and research note, tuition affects enrollment, and the impact is greater for less advantaged students. For example, Heller (1999) found that, during the years 1976 to 1994, a \$1,000 increase in average community college tuition (in constant 1994 dollars) led to an average drop of 2.1 percentage points in the proportion of a state's population age 18 to 24 years old enrolled in community colleges.⁷ However, the drops were even larger for nonwhite students, particularly Asians (Heller, 1999: 76, 79). Similarly, an analysis of college entrants in 1982 found that the impact of tuition increases is considerably greater for students whose socioeconomic status is low than for those with a higher SES: an increase of \$1,000 in tuition led to a 3.4% drop in all college enrollments for students in the bottom quartile in SES as versus a 1.4% drop for students in the top quartile (Terenzini, Cabrera, & Bernal, 2001: 11).⁸

Average tuitions for community colleges differ greatly across the five states, with average tuitions in 2005-06 ranging between \$1191 in New Mexico and \$2135 in Virginia (Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 9). However, tuition costs have to be balanced against how much aid students are getting and what the family income levels are in a state. If we look at net cost of community college (tuition and, if applicable, room and board minus student aid) as a percentage of the median income of families in the lower 40% of the family income distribution, we find that the proportion ranges between 29% in Virginia and 38% in Florida, with the other states clustered around 32 and 33% (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004). Hence, for the most part, the states converge on net cost, with Florida being somewhat of an outlier.

One area of great divergence is whether undocumented students are allowed to pay instate tuition as opposed to the usually much higher out-of-state rate. New Mexico and Texas allow the former, but the other three states do not. In fact, legislation to do so was defeated in the other three states. This is an area deserving further policy activity in those three states.

All five states have made some commitment to keeping down tuition. In Texas and Virginia the state body coordinating or governing the community colleges has made a formal commitment to keeping down tuition.⁹ In a third state (North Carolina) there is an informal commitment, and in

the remaining two states mechanisms exist to keep down tuition. States may wish to consider making a formal commitment to keeping down tuition and instituting mechanisms to insure it.

Student Aid

State student aid expenditures affect enrollment rates in a state, both in community colleges and public higher education more generally. In a study covering the period 1976 to 1994, Heller (1999) found that a \$100 increase in spending for grants was associated with a significant increase in community college enrollments for blacks, though not for other racial or ethnic groups or for students generally (Heller, 1999: 79). Moreover, there is evidence that low-income students are considerably more responsive to a given size grant than are upper income students, though less responsive in the case of loans (Terenzini et al., 2001: 11).

The five states vary greatly in the proportion of their total student aid devoted to need-based grants. In 2003-04, Texas devoted 84% to need-based grants, Virginia and North Carolina 58% and 50% respectively, and New Mexico and Florida 30% and 23%. The national average is 62% (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005: 8).¹⁰ The states with below average proportions of aid going to need-based grants should strongly consider increasing the proportion, at least to the national average.

None of the states provides any substantial aid specifically earmarked for minority students, in good part because doing so has become increasingly difficult legally and politically. However, a change in political winds may allow revisiting this policy in coming years.

The states differ considerably on whether they provide aid specifically for two groups that are disproportionately low income and minority in composition: part-time and undocumented students. Three states have aid programs specifically for part-time students (Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia).¹¹ However, all five of the states allow part-time students taking at least 6 or 9 credits a semester (depending on the state) to be eligible for the regular aid programs.

Meanwhile, only two states – again, New Mexico and Texas – make undocumented students eligible for state student aid. However, in states where that is not the case, community colleges have sometimes provided student aid that they have raised on their own. States where undocumented students are not eligible for student aid may wish to consider making such students eligible. They may come to share the conclusion of Texas policymakers that providing college opportunities for undocumented students who have been in the country for a significant amount of time is important – even if opponents find arguments of social justice unconvincing – in order to ensure that the state economy has an adequate supply of skilled workers.

Three of the states (Florida, Texas, and Virginia) have policies of linking student aid to tuition, so as tuition rises so does aid. In the case of Texas, the state requires colleges to put a portion of their tuition revenues into what is called the Texas Public Education Grants, which are then awarded as need-based aid to students. Florida has an informal policy of linking aid to tuition but it only applies to the merit-based Bright Futures program.

Outreach to Students

We particularly focused on two kinds of state outreach programs: pre-college early intervention programs similar to the federal Talent Search and GEAR UP and dual-enrollment programs.

Pre-college outreach programs have not been subject to much rigorous evaluation. However, there are a few careful evaluations that have found that participating in an outreach program during high school significantly increases the odds of high school graduates enrolling in college (Fenske, Geranios, Keller, & Moore, 1997; Horn, 1997: 40-42; Perna & Swail, 2002: 103). What is less clear is what program characteristics matter. Program administrators believe that successful early intervention programs are characterized by a clear focus, motivated and committed students, involved parents, an early start in the educational pipeline, links with schools on curricula and schedules, links with other community organizations, and adaptation to the particular needs of the students, school, and community. However, there is little research to back up these claims (Perna & Swail, 2001: 104).

According to a national survey of pre-college outreach programs in 1999-2000, about one-sixth are funded by state governments (Swail & Perna, 2002: 21). In the case of the five Achieving the Dream states, all of them have some kind of outreach program. However, the programs are much better developed in some states (particularly Florida, North Carolina, and Texas) than others (New Mexico and Virginia).

Dual-enrollment programs are quite popular with states but they have not received much careful evaluation. There are a number of studies that find that dually enrolled students are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college, but virtually none of them controls for differences between the kinds of students enrolling and not enrolling in dual-enrollment programs. One disquieting finding in one of these studies was that as many as half of four-year colleges surveyed were leery of giving credit for dual-enrollment courses offered at high schools (Bailey & Karp, 2003: 15-20, 31-35; Johnstone & Del Genio, 2001: 51-52).

Whatever the case, all the first-round Achieving the Dream states are supporting dual enrollment by providing state funding to both community colleges and high schools for the same student who is taking community college courses while still in high school. One of the main variations among the states is whether students are charged tuition. In two states (Florida and North Carolina), students do not have to pay college tuition when participating in dual-enrollment programs. In the other three states it is left to the discretion of the community colleges (see also Karp et al., 2004, 2005).

Accessible Curriculum

The community college has long been characterized as a comprehensive institution that is not just focused on academically oriented students pursuing higher degrees. Hence, besides the university-parallel curriculum for students pursuing a baccalaureate degree, community colleges have long offered occupational, adult, and continuing education programs. These programs – which often have a large noncredit component – have proved to be important entry points for nontraditional students, whether older in age or less advantaged in background (Grubb, 1996; Grubb et al., 2003; Prince & Jenkins, 2005). Here we focus on state policies governing the provision of such programs, but in the success section, we will also consider state policies to make sure that those entering the community college through these nontraditional portals do succeed in attaining valuable credentials from community colleges.

With regard to occupational education, all the Achieving the Dream states but New Mexico provide by statute that community colleges must offer occupational education. Moreover, all five of the states fund it through their regular enrollment-based funding formulas.

Adult education (including adult basic education and English as a second language) is a statutory responsibility of the community college in Florida, North Carolina, and Texas, though all five fund the colleges directly or indirectly (through the K-12 system) to provide adult education.

Convenient Access

Community college students are more likely to mention location and schedule as important considerations in choosing a college than are other students (Bueschel, 2004: 265; Choy & Ottinger, 1998). For example, in the 1995-96 Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:96), location was especially important to beginning students at public two-year institutions: 46% of them mentioned being close to home as being an important consideration in choosing the college, while only 32% of four-year college students mentioned the same. In fact, community college students mentioned location-related reasons more often than any other reason (Choy & Ottinger, 1998: 27, 51, 63).

Do states respond to the importance of location and schedule by trying to influence community colleges to respond to these factors? At one level the answer is yes. The states have made an effort to make sure that community colleges are widely scattered across the state, so that the colleges are within easy commuting distance of students. However, none of the states mandates that community colleges create satellite facilities or use nontraditional scheduling or short courses. Only one state provides extra funding for such efforts. (North Carolina provides extra funding for the added overhead of satellite facilities).¹²

However, all five of the states (except possibly North Carolina) do fund distance education through their regular enrollment-based state funding formulas, and all these states provide one or another form of infrastructural aid: for example, a state webpage where students can find distance education courses statewide.

These patterns of state activity across the various areas of access policy are summarized in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.

Success Policies

With regard to success, we examined the state's degree of public commitment to increasing student success and specific state policies influencing institutional practices involving remediation, academic and non-academic counseling and guidance, transfer to four-year colleges, provision of the baccalaureate degree at community colleges, noncredit to credit articulation, and workforce and economic development.

We discussed above the significant impact of tuition and student aid on college access, but it is important to note as well its impact on student success. There is considerable evidence that tuition and student aid levels significantly affect student persistence and degree completion, particularly in the case of low-income students (Heller, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005: 408, 415-416; St. John, 1991; St. John, Paulsen, & Starkey, 1996; St. John, Hu, & Weber, 2001).

Public Commitment to Increasing Student Success

All five of the first-round Achieving the Dream states have publicly committed themselves to improving student success in the community college. However, as with access, the states differ in how formal these commitments are: formal plans and mission statements (Texas and Virginia), public statements of a less formal nature (Florida and New Mexico), or programs addressing the needs specifically of low-income and minority students such as need-based aid or minority mentoring programs (all five of the states). Moreover, the states differ in whether they explicitly set targets for increased success for minority and low-income students. Only Texas has set specific targets for increased success by minority students (Hispanics and blacks), and none of the states has set targets for low-income students.

Remedial Education

Many low-income and minority students come into the community college with inadequate academic skills to tackle college-level work. As a result, virtually all community colleges offer remedial education (also called developmental education). According to a federal survey, 42% of all first-year community college students were taking remediation in the year 2000 (Parsad & Lewis, 2003).¹³

Given the importance of remediation, it is important that community college students have ready access to high quality remediation, receive financial aid while receiving remediation, and not have their stay in remediation exhaust their time and financial aid to such an extent that they

cannot secure a degree. Unfortunately, the research on remediation has not reached definitive conclusions on what kind of remediation works best with what kinds of students. Thoughtful researchers greatly disagree on whether there is a good enough body of research to definitively settle what form it should take (Dougherty, 2002: 312-314; McCabe, 2000; Phipps & Merisotis, 2000; Perin, 2005; Roueche & Roueche, 1999; Roueche, Ely, & Roueche, 2001).¹⁴ Where state policy has focused is on such issues as mandatory assessment and placement of students. Yet, although such policies seem on the face of it to make a lot of sense, we do not even have definitive evaluations of whether they actually work, either in securing uniform compliance from colleges or in fostering effective remediation for students.

All five of the first round Achieving the Dream states provide state financing for remediation programs through their enrollment-based funding system. Moreover, all these states allow students to receive state student aid while they are receiving remediation.¹⁵ However, the states differ in whether they put limits on how often the state will pay for remediation in the case of a given student. Three states (Florida, Texas, and Virginia) have such limits: for example, in Florida, the state does not pay the college for a student's remedial course if he or she takes it more than twice. Any subsequent time goes without state funding. However, it is not at all clear that states have any way of really keeping track of how often students have taken courses, so this may be more a symbolic show of fiscal discipline than anything else.

All of the states but one (New Mexico) mandate that community college students must be tested for purposes of course placement. In the four states with mandatory testing, students are explicitly exempted if they achieve certain scores on national tests such as the SAT or ACT. Moreover, there is substantial evidence that colleges informally exempt students. For example, a study of two community colleges in Florida found that one did not test most occupational students and, when it did test students, it waited until they had declared a major before testing them.¹⁶ And examining two colleges in Texas, that same study found that one of them did not assess students' writing skills (Perin, 2006). We found evidence of informal exemptions at work in Virginia as well.

Four states (Florida, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia) mandate which tests can be used for academic placement, and three of them set explicit cutoff scores designating whether someone is in need of remediation. Virginia, while mandating testing, has not set explicit cutoff scores but has left it to the discretion of the colleges.¹⁷

There is considerable variation in whether states make remediation mandatory in cases where students have failed the test. Only Florida and Virginia have made assignment to remediation mandatory. North Carolina and Texas have left it to the discretion of the colleges. And of course New Mexico does not have mandatory testing. Texas had made assignment mandatory under the old Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) program. But under the current Texas Success Initiative (TSI), the state has moved to leaving this up to the discretion of the colleges. The result has been – as a recent survey found – that one-third of community colleges report no longer requiring mandatory remedial education for students failing the placement test (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005: 7-10). And even when remediation is supposed to be mandatory, it is not clear that the state rules are always followed. A study of two community colleges in Florida found that one issued waivers from remediation if it did not have space for all the students requiring remediation and, if a student failed the placement test in two areas, that

college only required remediation in one. Meanwhile, the other community college allowed students to take the College Placement Test repeatedly until they passed it (Perin, 2006).

Only Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia regulate the content of remedial education, to the extent that they require remedial courses to be listed in the state Common Course library or numbering system.

Two states (Florida and Virginia) have ruled that four-year colleges should not be offering remediation, but rather should relegate it to the community colleges.

Only Florida explicitly states that students should be allowed to take college-credit courses in skill areas in which they are not being remediated. However, Virginia has encouraged community colleges to consider this. Such a policy may be important as a means to keep students moving through college and not getting bogged down in remediation.¹⁸

Only Florida regulates the conditions under which a student is deemed ready to leave remediation; the other states leave this decision to institutional discretion.

Many community college students who need remediation are adults who have been out of school for years. However, a substantial number of recent high school graduates also enter college with inadequate math, reading, or writing skills. To remedy this problem, all five states have acted to foster better alignment between the skills that colleges expect and those that high schools produce, a major recommendation by Michael Kirst and his colleagues (Kirst, Venezia, & Lising, 2004: 309-314). This effort has taken such forms as pushing high schools and community colleges to align their exit and entry requirements (Florida and New Mexico) and reporting to the high schools how many of their graduates require remediation when entering college (Florida, North Carolina, and Texas). Moreover, Florida and Virginia have encouraged community colleges to administer their placement tests to high school sophomores. Finally, in all these states – particularly Virginia – dual-enrollment programs are seen as carrying the promise of fostering greater curricular alignment between high school and college (Kirst et al., 2004: 314).¹⁹

The lack of much state policy guidance regarding the content of remediation, whether students can take college-level courses in non-remedial areas, and when students should exit from remediation is striking. It is questionable whether such important decisions should be left to institutional discretion. However, states are hampered by the fact that there is no firm consensus on what works in remediation. This begs for further research on the impact of different remediation practices and state policies governing such practices. We return to this below.

Counseling and Guidance: Academic and Non-Academic

There is considerable research evidence that counseling – particularly in the form of comprehensive support and retention programs – has a significant positive effect on student retention and graduation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). And students entering community colleges need a great deal of counseling. They often enter with academic skills that are below college grade and need remediation, but they need to be guided to the right form of remediation. Their aspirations are frequently unclear or contradictory. And as they enter the community

college, they encounter a wide variety of programs whose payoffs and requirements are quite different but not easy to distinguish. And if they have been away a long time from school or are not coming from college-educated families, the requirements of registering for classes, getting financial aid, and choosing a major may be daunting. Yet despite the importance of counseling, it often is not readily available or of high quality (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003; Grubb, 2001).

Clearly, these difficulties would indicate the importance of state support and guidance of the counseling efforts of community colleges. But one of our most striking findings of this study is that the five first-round Achieving the Dream states all exhibit the same pattern of inaction in this area. None of them provides dedicated funding for counseling and guidance. The services are to be funded by colleges from their general state funding for instruction or student support services.²⁰ Moreover, none of the states sets standards for the form and content of that counseling and guidance.²¹ This absence of state standards leaves the possibility of great variation across community colleges in the quality of counseling and guidance being provided. Even if states are reluctant to impose standards,²² there is still great room for them to encourage community colleges to provide sufficient levels of guidance and counseling and to explore what are the best means of providing it. We will come back to what might be desirable state policies in this area.

Transfer Assistance

Successful transfer is particularly important for minority and low-income baccalaureate aspirants, since a majority of them start in community colleges. Transfer problems are a major reason that such students do not achieve a baccalaureate degree at the same rates as their more advantaged peers (Dougherty, 1994: chap. 4; Dougherty, 2002; Wellman, 2002: 6). Even among students entering community college with the intent of completing a bachelor's degree or higher, the majority do not transfer to a four-year college within the next five years and there are large race and social class gaps in transfer. For example, among community college entrants in 1989-1990 in the national Beginning Postsecondary Student (BPS:90) Longitudinal Survey, only 36% of those with baccalaureate aspirations had transferred to a four-year college by spring 1994.²³ Those in the highest quartile in socioeconomic status (SES) had a transfer rate of 49% but those in the lowest quartile had a transfer rate of only 21%. Meanwhile, among non-Hispanic whites with baccalaureate or greater ambitions, the transfer rate was 38%, but only 16% for non-Hispanic blacks (though 34% for Hispanics) with similar ambitions (Bradburn, Hurst, & Peng, 2001: 23, 66).²⁴ This class and race gap may seem simply due to differences in high school preparation, but an analysis of the BPS:90 and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) finds that the class and racial gap in transfer rates still remains (though it gets smaller) even when we control for class and race differences in high school test scores and educational and occupational aspirations at the time of college entrance (Dougherty & Kienzl, 2006).

Given the importance of transfer and the fact of class and racial disparities in it, what have the Achieving the Dream states done to remedy this situation? We find that none of the states provides dedicated student aid funding for transfer students, which is an issue because such students have needs different from other students. Moreover, none of the states provides dedicated funding or standards for transfer advising by community colleges.²⁵ Colleges finance

transfer advising at their discretion from the state instructional or student services appropriation and whatever local funds they wish to apply. Yet, those advocating increasing transfer rates have repeatedly pointed to the importance of ensuring good transfer advising and providing state aid to transfer students (Dougherty, 1994: 255-256; Rifkin, 1998).

Instead, the main focus of the states has been on ensuring that the credits that students acquire at the community college are successfully transferred. All but Virginia²⁶ have created general education transfer modules that are guaranteed transfer from community colleges to four-year colleges, created statewide guidelines to ease the transfer of occupational credits,²⁷ defined common prerequisites for certain majors, and mandated common course numbering for courses with the same content across different institutions.

Despite these notable efforts, there clearly are a number of important areas with regard to transfer where more policy effort should occur: dedicated state aid for transfer students; dedicated funding and standards for transfer advising within the community college; for those states without it (all but Florida and North Carolina), providing guaranteed junior status for academic associate graduates; extending transfer articulation to private as well as public institutions; further strengthening nascent efforts to ensure the transfer of occupational credits,²⁸ ensuring the transferability of dual-enrollment credits; expanding the use of post-transfer success as an accountability measure (see more on this below); and including transfer measures in performance accountability for four-year institutions.

Baccalaureate Provision

One of the most interesting changes in the community college in recent years is the appearance of programs by which community colleges themselves offer baccalaureate degrees, particularly in applied areas (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005). The ultimate impact of the community baccalaureate on community colleges and on students is a matter of great contention. Some have hailed it as resolving many of the structural problems involved in trying to arrange the seamless movement of community college students toward the baccalaureate, insofar as that movement has heretofore required students to move from one kind of institution to a very different one, resulting in a considerable hampering of student success (Dougherty, 2002: 329-330). Others have argued that it may be very difficult to offer baccalaureate programs of any quality and the baccalaureate-offering two-year college may cease to be truly a community college (Townsend, 2005).

Perhaps because of the recency of the community college baccalaureate movement (Floyd et al., 2005), there is much less consensus across the five Achieving the Dream states on this policy than on many aspects of transfer policy. Only three of the states (Florida, New Mexico, and Texas) have authorized community colleges to themselves offer baccalaureate degrees and New Mexico's effort is very recent. Meanwhile, although four states (Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Virginia) provide some encouragement for state universities to offer upper-division instruction at community colleges, this encouragement does not take the form of a mandate or of financing. For example, in Florida, the state encourages university centers and provides indirect support insofar as the threat of a community college being able to get state permission to

establish a baccalaureate program has prompted universities to be receptive to community colleges' requests for university courses on their campuses. Meanwhile, in New Mexico, universities began to offer upper-division instruction at community colleges when the Council for Higher Education (the predecessor of the current Higher Education Department) put distance education on the same funding level as on-campus instruction and removed service area limits.

Noncredit to Credit Articulation

Adult-education students are a key community college constituency, particularly if one is thinking of the community college role in ensuring equality of opportunity. It is estimated that 33% of adult-education enrollees are in community colleges and such students make up 7% of total credit and noncredit FTE enrollments in community colleges.²⁹ About three-quarters of these community college adult-education students are in the bottom half in SES and about half are nonwhite (Grubb et al., 2002: 223; Morest, 2004: 9-11, 15; Prince & Jenkins, 2005).

Despite the hopes for adult-education programs, there is little evidence that they bring significant income benefits if they do not lead to a degree (Grubb et al., 2003: 229-233; Prince & Jenkins, 2005: 5-6, 21). Yet many adult-education students enter the community college through the noncredit side – whether taking high school equivalency (GED), adult basic education (ABE), English as a second language (ESL), and so forth – and fail to acquire economically valuable credits and credentials. A study of first-time adult students entering Washington State community colleges in the late 1990's (the majority of whom did not have high school diplomas) found that five years later only 58% had acquired any college credits (with only 13% of ESL entrants doing so). Yet, the same study found that the more college credits students acquire the higher their annual earnings. In fact, the payoff only becomes significant if students accrue at least a year's worth of credit and a credential (Prince & Jenkins, 2005: 13-16, 23).³⁰

Clearly, it is important that low-income adults entering noncredit programs successfully move on to college-credit programs. However, it is striking that none of the five first-round Achieving the Dream states mandates, provides funds, or (with the exception of Florida)³¹ sets standards to encourage the movement of students from the noncredit to the credit curriculum. However, there may be an important state role to stimulate and guide local actions in such areas as better publicizing to adult noncredit students the desirability and possibility of moving into the credit program, providing them with financial aid³² and support services, establishing articulation agreements with the credit programs to allow for some conversion of noncredit into credit courses, and providing assessment of prior learning (Grubb et al., 2003: 226; Prince & Jenkins, 2005: 24-25; Voorhees & Lingenfelter, 2003).

Workforce and Economic Development

Workforce and economic development has become a major commitment of community colleges over many decades, with this role broadening from preservice training through credit programs to include inservice training, much of it through noncredit programs. State policy has played a major role in this development, both through mission definition, funding, and more recently performance accountability (Dougherty, 2001; Dougherty & Bakia, 2000; Downey, Turner, & Pusser, 2006; Jacobs & Dougherty, 2006).³³

All five of the first-round Achieving the Dream states encourage the community colleges to engage in workforce and economic development such as contract training or small business development. All but New Mexico make workforce development a statutory obligation and all five provide encouragement and funding.

The efforts of the states in the area of policies affecting student success are anatomized in Table 2 at the end of this chapter.

Performance Accountability

Beginning in the 1990s, state governments actively joined the performance accountability (PA) movement. The leading theme of this movement has been making higher education institutions perform better by focusing not on enrollment growth but rather on gains in student outcomes. By 2003, 47 states had some form of PA: 46 had performance reporting; 21, performance budgeting (in which the state government states that performance will be used to inform appropriation decisions); and 15, performance funding (where an explicit formula ties some portion of institutional funding to performance) (Burke & Minassians, 2003).

State performance accountability policies have the potential of serving the goals of equality of access and success, but the right indicators must be used, particularly ones that directly address equality for minority and low-income students. Moreover, there must be support for state policymakers and local community college officials to recognize and respond to those performance outcome indicators. Below we analyze the degree of convergence between the states in what performance indicators are used, how those indicators are attached to state funding, how extensively state officials use performance data to craft state policies, and how well community colleges themselves respond to state performance data.

Performance Indicators

We have analyzed what kinds of performance indicators the states collect and then report. It should be noted that states often collect more data than they actually publicly report or use as performance measures. Our focus here is on what performance data are publicly reported, though we also note what data are reported to the legislature or to the community colleges themselves.

Measures of Student Access

The states all collect and publicly report measures of the racial-ethnic composition of their enrollments. Florida, Texas, and Virginia also publicly break down enrollments by student income.

Measures of Student Success

The states collect and report a wide variety of measures of student success such as rates of persistence, graduation, transfer, and job placement.

Persistence. All five states report data on one year (fall to fall) persistence of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students. In the case of all but New Mexico, these data are reported as part of the State Data Project of the Southern Regional Education Board. Only Texas publicly breaks down these data by race, and none of the states does so by student income. New Mexico and Virginia also report data for fall to spring persistence, again not broken down publicly by race or income.

Successful Remediation. Three of the states report measures of successful remediation (Florida, North Carolina, and Texas). For example, North Carolina reports data on the percentage of developmental students completing a course with a C or better, the percentage of basic skills students who moved to a higher level, and the percentage of developmental education completers who had a C or better in a subsequent college level course. Only Florida breaks these data down by race,³⁴ and no state does so by income.

Course Completion. Only two of the states (New Mexico and Texas) report measures of course completion. For example, New Mexico reports what percentage of courses attempted are actually completed. Neither state publicly reports course completion rates by race or income, though New Mexico is planning to do so in the future.

Skill Attainment. Three states (Florida, Texas, and Virginia) measure the attainment of skills. For example, Florida reports to the community colleges the proportion of students with 60 or more credit hours who pass the rising junior College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST). Texas measures the number of marketable skills award completers. Only Texas breaks these skill-attainment results by race; none of the states does so by income.

Graduation. All five states report measures of graduation, both gross numbers and sometimes proportions of an entering cohort. Often the rates are broken down by type of degree such as associate and certificate. Florida, New Mexico, and Texas publicly break down these figures by race-ethnicity, but only Florida does a limited breakdown by income (as defined by eligibility for either Pell, SEOG, or Florida need-based aid). These figures are limited to first-time and generally full-time students.

Graduation Efficiency. Three states (Florida, New Mexico, and Virginia) report various measures of graduation efficiency or time to degree. For example, the latter two states report the

proportion of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who complete their programs within 150% of their program length. None of these states reports these data by student race or income.

Transfer. All the states except North Carolina report data on the number transferring and, typically, the transfer rate. Florida and Texas publicly break down these figures by race-ethnicity, but only Florida does so by income.

Success after Transfer. All but Texas report measures of student success after transferring. For example, Virginia uses three different measures: (1) average GPA for community college entrants who earned 12 or more credits at the community college and transferred within four years of entrance; (2) the proportion completing a baccalaureate or higher degree within eight years of entrance among community college entrants who earned 12 credits and transferred within four years; and (3) the percentage who are in good standing one year after graduation. None of the states publicly report their post-transfer success measures by race-ethnicity and income.

Licensure Exam Passage. All but Virginia report rates of passage of licensure exams for students whose discipline requires passage of such an exam. None of the states publicly reports rates by student race or income, except for Texas, which reports teacher education passage rates broken down by race.

Job Placement. All five states publish data on job placement rates for graduates. Typically, the followup period is one year after graduation. Only New Mexico and Texas publicly report a breakdown by race-ethnicity (and in the case of New Mexico, it is only for the state system as a whole rather than by individual college). None of the states reports a breakdown by student income.

These performance indicators are summarized in Table 3 at the end of this chapter.

Data Collection Procedures

All the states have established a capacity to aggregate and analyze data across their entire community college systems. However, only Florida and Texas have established data warehouses that allow aggregation of the data across the boundaries of the community college, university, and K-12 sectors.

Connection of Performance Indicators to State Funding

Three states have established performance funding systems – Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia – by which performance data directly shape state allocations to the community colleges.³⁵ Florida's system goes back to 1996, whereas North Carolina's was enacted in 1999 and Virginia's only in 2005. In addition, Texas has a performance budgeting system in which systemwide performance data are weighed by a special legislative body – the Legislative Budget Bureau – as it assesses the proposed budget for the community college system. However, there is little evidence that performance data have had much of any effect on appropriations to the Texas community colleges.

Evaluations of Impact

Impact on State Policymaking

In only two states (Florida and Texas) is there clear evidence that community college performance data have shaped state policy. In the case of Texas, it was widely held that performance data played an important part in leading state officials to launch the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's well-known *Closing the Gaps* initiative to increase student access and success for minority students, particularly Latinos and Blacks.

But even in Florida and Texas, it is not clear how much influence performance data have outside the precincts of the lead state community college education agency. There is little sense that legislators and state gubernatorial advisors are much affected by, or even all that aware of, the state community college performance data. For example, a Florida state official noted: "We certainly look at those numbers....[The Chancellor] shares them with the rest of the folks in DOE all the time. Having watched some of the legislative processes, how much they are actually used I am not sure."

And in the other states, the effort to use performance data to craft state policy is still nascent. As a state official in Virginia noted, "we are struggling with understanding who is dropping out and why and I think we'll come to a greater understanding of that soon, but we are in that process. Then having that information...inform policy development, we haven't crossed that threshold."

Impact on Community College Practice

Performance accountability systems – even when they involve performance funding – seem to have at best a moderately strong influence on actions by the community colleges. This conclusion stems both from reports by state and local officials we interviewed for this study and the results of another study that the senior author conducted on performance accountability in six states, two of which are Achieving the Dream states: Florida, Texas, Illinois, California, Washington, and New York (Dougherty & Hong, 2005; in press). That study found only weak evidence that states with seemingly stronger accountability systems (indexed by the presence and strength of a performance funding system) have indeed produced stronger student outcomes.³⁶

There is certainly evidence that state performance accountability systems lead community colleges to take actions to improve their remediation results. Yet, because of incompatible measures of remediation success across states, it is hard to tell whether states with stronger accountability systems, such as Florida, in the end actually have higher rates of remedial success than do the other states with weaker systems or, in New York's case, no state system of performance accountability for community colleges.

There is considerable evidence that the rising state emphasis on retention and graduation has led community colleges to move to improve both. Despite all these efforts, the association between the strength of state accountability systems and changes in state retention and graduation rates is moderate at best. States that have strong performance accountability systems with respect to graduation – such as Florida – do show sizable increases in graduation rates, but it is also the case that Washington – which has not included graduation rates in its performance reporting system or (now defunct) performance funding system – has nearly as good a record of rising graduation rates. Moreover, Florida's record is weaker than that of Illinois, which had a considerably weaker performance funding system (Dougherty & Hong, in press).

Higher rates of transfer between community colleges and four-year colleges are a frequent goal of performance accountability systems, but the evidence that this greater attention has indeed produced significant results is weak. Florida has had far smaller increases in numbers transferring than states with weaker accountability systems (Dougherty & Hong, in press).³⁷

Finally, the five states with state performance accountability systems (all but New York) showed improvements on various measures of job placement. But as with remediation, the indices the states use are not comparable, making difficult any clear conclusion about the association between the strength of a state's accountability system and its degree of success in job placement (Dougherty & Hong, in press).

One reason that performance funding does not seem to have a clear and significant impact is that in all these cases the amount of money involved is not all that large. Moreover, community colleges encounter significant obstacles in responding to performance demands: poorly designed measures of success; funding that is unstable and does not keep pace with increasing enrollments; and inequalities in institutional capacity. Community college respondents are especially critical of measures of retention and graduation and job placement that do not reflect the particularities of community colleges' mission and context and thus make them seem to perform less well than they actually do. For example, they note that measures of student success that focus on the attainment of degrees often fail to acknowledge that a sizable number of students enter community college without a strong intention – and perhaps even any intention – of receiving a degree.³⁸ Another obstacle community college officials note is that performance funding formulas are often unstable, making it hard for community colleges to accurately predict how much money they will make and to plan their curricular offerings accordingly. Thirdly, community college officials, especially in Florida, complain that performance funding has not kept pace with enrollment increases and provides a cover for keeping down state appropriations in the name of greater efficiency. Finally, some of our interviewees raised the concern that performance funding may create a vicious cycle where urban community colleges and small, rural community colleges with more disadvantaged students and fewer institutional resources will find it difficult to meet state standards and hence lose funding, further compounding their

lack of resources and imperiling their future performance. This would create a strong disincentive for colleges to vigorously reach out to disadvantaged students (Dougherty & Hong, 2005; in press).

The intended impacts of performance accountability are not the only ones at issue. Publicly unintended, and unfortunately negative, impacts apparently occur as well. They include a weakening of academic standards, imposition of costs of complying with accountability demands, and more speculatively, constriction of open door admissions and narrowing of institutional missions.

In the six state study discussed above (Dougherty & Hong, 2005; in press), the weakening of academic standards has taken the form of pressing faculty to avoid giving out failing grades and eliminating courses and course content that, while barriers to graduation, are also important elements of the preparation of educated people. So far, the constriction of the open door has been limited, involving instances of making certain programs more selective in order to elevate their retention and graduation rates by limiting the intake of less prepared students. But the possibility is there of community colleges being tempted – if performance demands tighten – to become more selective in their admissions to wider swaths of their programs. A shrinking of the open door would already be a huge restriction of the mission of the community college, but mission restriction may also occur because key missions of the community college – for example, general education and community services – are not backed with performance measures and thus may receive less attention from community colleges. The final unintended impact of performance accountability is that it often imposes considerable compliance costs on community colleges in the form of large outlays to collect and report required data (Dougherty & Hong, 2005; in press).

While the above should make us leery of claims that performance accountability is any kind of policy panacea, we should not simply dismiss its significance or utility. There is evidence that performance accountability does have an impact, even if it is not as big as its advocates have claimed. Arguably, the most important part of this impact comes with performance reporting, even if no financial rewards or penalties are attached by states to the outcomes. The fact that colleges have to collect data and report it to the state not only leads them to become more aware of state priorities and of their own performance but also to build up their own technical and intellectual capacity for self-analysis (Dougherty & Hong, in press).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STATE POLICY

The profiles the states present in terms of policy suggest particular areas they may wish to consider for future policy. In the conclusions to each of the state chapters, we make particular suggestions for that state as to what areas of policymaking it may wish to consider for future action.

There are, however, across all the states some notable areas of omission that should be considered in common by the states.

Access Policies

Admissions Policies

Though open door admissions are strongly supported in the states, areas of policy action still remain:

Providing additional funding when community colleges are faced with unusually big increases in enrollments: Even if the open door is statutorily open, community colleges have – when overwhelmed by enrollments – informally narrowed it by not offering all the sections that students demand. When under such pressure, they need state financial support to keep their doors open.

Setting explicit targets for access and success for minority and low-income students: One of the most notable features of state community college policy in Texas has been the setting of explicit targets – as part of the state Coordinating Board’s *Closing the Gaps* initiatives – for increased access and success by minority and low-income students. This is a strategy that other states should strongly consider.

Revisiting the issue of access for undocumented students: If the political climate changes, the Achieving the Dream states where undocumented students are not statutorily eligible for enrollment in the community college (Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida) may wish to revisit the issue of such a guarantee. It would not leave the admission of undocumented immigrants to institutional discretion and, quite likely, uneven application.

Tuition

Given the negative impact of higher tuition on access and persistence and the fact that community college tuitions have been rising rapidly, states need to find ways to keep them down:

Keeping down tuition: Though the Achieving the Dream states have variously made efforts to keep down tuitions, those that have not already done so should consider making a more formal commitment to such a policy and instituting concrete mechanisms to insure it.

Allowing instate tuition for undocumented students: Three of the Achieving Dream states do not provide for this, instead allowing such students to be charged the higher out-of-state tuition. Again, if the political climate concerning immigration changes, these three states may wish to legislate that instate tuition should be charged to undocumented immigrants who have gone to high school in the state.

Student Aid

States have made great strides in providing student aid for community college students. Nonetheless, they may wish to consider three important areas of further policymaking:

Increasing the amount that is need-based: Those states that are below the national average in the proportion of state aid that is need-based grants (62%) should make strong efforts to raise the need-based grant component of their total state aid.

Providing dedicated funding for part-time students: The two states that do not have dedicated aid for part-time students should consider providing it, given the special needs of this body of students.

Making undocumented students eligible for state aid: The three states that do not provide such eligibility should consider doing so.

Ensuring that students do not largely exhaust their eligibility while still in remediation: Means need to be found to ensure that students requiring extensive remediation do not largely exhaust their eligibility for student aid while still being remediated, leaving little aid to support their college-level studies.

Outreach Programs

The states have made notable efforts to create programs to attract students to college and the community college in particular, but more can be done:

Making more concerted outreach efforts in some states: Though all the Achieving the Dream states support outreach programs, some of the states have less developed programs than others and should consider expanding their efforts.

Ensuring that dual-enrollment programs are widely used by disadvantaged students: Dual-enrollment programs are attractive to community colleges in part because they are ways of attracting the interest and political support of affluent students and parents who would otherwise first think of attending four-year colleges (Bailey & Morest, 2004). But because of this incentive,

states need to consider how to provide incentives for community colleges to extend dual-enrollment opportunities to minority and low-income students.

Providing a tuition waiver for dual-enrollment students: The three states that do not provide guaranteed tuition waivers for dual-enrollment students should consider doing so.

Accessible Curriculum

Mandating a community college role in adult education: For the most part community colleges are actively involved in providing adult education, but only three of the Achieving the Dream states make this a statutory responsibility of community colleges (though all provide funding directly or indirectly to the colleges for adult education). Given the key role community colleges can and do play in college opportunities for adults, the remaining states should consider mandating such a role.

Convenient Access

Providing state support for community college efforts to make access more convenient: States should provide funding and other support for community colleges to provide maximum access for place- and time-bound students through satellite facilities, evening and weekend classes, and short-term and fractional courses. To be sure, colleges often make such efforts, but it would be useful to have this backed up by state policy instruments.

Success Policies

Remedial Education

Though states have been active in remediation policy, areas for further policy effort still remain:

Providing incentives for community colleges to vigorously experiment with new remediation techniques: One of the imperatives for such an effort is the finding that nonwhite and low-income students are more likely to participate in remediation but less likely to complete it (Bettinger & Long, 2005: 21-22). The lack of certainty in the research literature about what form of remediation works best does not mean that states should drop the issue of best practices. One thing that states could certainly do is to provide incentives for community colleges to vigorously experiment with new remediation techniques, by providing state funding for innovative programs and by making remedial success a performance reporting measure (see below for more on this). Moreover, states should – as Florida is doing – actively disseminate information on best practices for which there is a solid research basis.

Providing state support for having students take credit courses while in remedial education:

States need to explore how to prevent students from becoming mired in remedial education and leaving the community college without a degree. One way might be for states to mandate – and not just simply allow – community colleges to permit students being remediated in one skill (such as math) to take at the same time credit courses that do not depend on the skill being remediated. However, this policy recommendation needs to be validated by research.

Providing state support for research on best practices in state policy: Just as there is still a relative dearth of conclusive research on best institutional practices in remedial education, there is also a lack of research on what state policies best support effective local practice. The mere fact that substantial variation in local practice occurs even in areas subject to state remediation policy suggests that such state policy may be problematic, certainly in execution but perhaps even in intent. Too often, states have enacted remediation policies without having clear research warrant that such policies really result in more effective remediation, much less secure a uniformity of institutional practice.

Counseling and Guidance

The absence of state policy regarding counseling and guidance – despite the importance of good quality counseling for student success – is striking. While state caution in being prescriptive is understandable, it also means that the counseling and guidance function of the community college is receiving inadequate support and standardization. Recommendations are these:

Providing dedicated state funding for counseling and guidance: The lack of specific funding leaves guidance and counseling at the mercy of the ebb and flow of community college funding and the belief that counseling can be cut when other demands are pressing.

Establishing state standards for counseling and guidance: States are leery of prescribing standards in this area – much as they are with instruction – but this absence leaves the possibility of great variation across community colleges in the quality of counseling and guidance being provided. States should incrementally move – particularly as supportive research evidence appears – to defining what counts for effective counseling and guidance practice.

Transfer

While the states have done much in the area of transfer, more remains to be done:

Providing student aid for transfer students: None of the states has a financial aid program specifically for transfer students, though the issue has been raised in Virginia. Yet transfer students have unique needs. They take longer to achieve a baccalaureate degree than four-year entrants, if only because they are more likely to undergo extensive college remediation, lose credits as they progress, and stop out of college (Dougherty, 2002: 327; Wellman, 2002: 47).

Providing funding and establishing standards for transfer advising: As with counseling and guidance generally, the states are reluctant to prescribe standards. But they should provide dedicated funding for this important function and guidance on how community colleges should carry it out. Certainly, there are useful models of state initiatives to improve the transfer advising process (Dougherty, 1994: 254-256; idem, 2002: 325-326).

Offering guaranteed junior status for academic associate graduates: The Achieving the Dream states could do more to ensure that community college students graduating with an academic associate degree will be admitted to a state university and given junior status. At present, only two of the Achieving the Dream states (Florida and North Carolina) have state policies guaranteeing this status.

Articulating transfer to private institutions: More needs to be done to ease the transfer of students to private four-year colleges, including for-profit institutions, given the importance of the private sector in many states and the not infrequent resistance of public four-year colleges to admit many transfer students (Townsend & Ignash, 2001; Wellman, 2002: 48). Yet, across the Achieving the Dream states, the focus is on easing transfer between the community colleges and the *public* four-year colleges, though private four-year colleges have sometimes become signatories to state transfer agreements, as is the case in Florida.

Enhancing transferability of occupational credits: Though the Achieving the Dream states are making notable efforts to ease the transfer of occupational students to baccalaureate programs, those efforts are still in their early stages. The greater inclusion of the for-profit colleges in articulation efforts may be especially helpful since they have been more open to occupational transfer than have other kinds of colleges (Dougherty, 2002: 327). Besides furthering current efforts to develop articulation agreements involving occupational majors, states can also encourage the establishment of “capstone” programs, as in Florida, in which occupational education courses in community colleges are credited by four-year colleges against a major in a technical field and the bulk of students’ upper-division course load is devoted to meeting four-year colleges’ general education requirements. Other promising devices are to introduce more general education into occupational programs so that they are more transferable and to ensure that the general education courses already required in those programs are meeting state requirements for transferable general education (Dougherty, 2002: 326-327; Ignash, 2005; Rifkin, 2000:6).

Guaranteeing the transferability of dual-enrollments credits: Since many community college dual-enrollment students will end up going to four-year schools, states need to take steps to ensure that dual-enrollment credits are accepted by the four-year schools, given the evidence of four-year college suspicion of such credits (Johnstone & Del Genio, 2001: 51-52).

Considering transfer measures as accountability measures for four-year institutions: Transfer outcomes should be monitored not just in the case of community colleges but also of the four-year colleges and universities. One way to do this is to make transfer performance measures apply to the entire higher education sector and not just to individual institutions, two-year or four-year (Wellman, 2002: vii, 46). Certainly, there is evidence from Virginia that the state’s making articulation a four-year college accountability measure has resulted in the four-year colleges being much more eager to ease transfer.

Considering post-transfer success as an important accountability measure: State performance accountability systems should address not just transfer numbers and rates but also post-transfer success, given that even after transfer community college students still encounter significant rates of dropout and failure to secure degrees (Dougherty, 2002: 320-323; Wellman, 2002: 45). Four of the Achieving the Dream states do have post-transfer performance measures, but for two the measure only addresses student grade point average after transfer. The measure of post-transfer success needs to be broadened to include graduation and – as with accountability measures generally – disaggregated by student income and race, since there are large social class, race, and age differences in transfer rates and post-transfer success (Bradburn, Hurst, & Peng, 2001: 23, 66; Dougherty & Kienzl, 2006; Lee, Mackie-Lewis, & Marks, 1993: 97).

Noncredit to Credit Articulation

Despite the importance of facilitating the movement of students from the noncredit to credit side of the community college, none of the Achieving the Dream states provides funding or other direct support for doing so. Recommended state policy changes include the following:

Providing state financial and other direct support for greater community college efforts: This support would aim to stimulate community colleges to better publicize the desirability and possibility of moving into the credit program, provide financial aid and support services, and establish articulation agreements with the credit programs to allow for more conversion of noncredit into credit courses. Several colleges in the Maricopa District (Phoenix, AZ) have been pioneering such programs, and the Washington State community college system is exploring ways of facilitating the transfer of adult students from noncredit to credit programs (Grubb et al., 2003: 226; Prince & Jenkins, 2005: 24-25).

Making adult noncredit to credit transition a performance measure for community colleges: The inclusion of such a measure will make it more likely that community colleges will attend to this problem.

Performance Accountability

While the states have done much in the area of performance accountability, important gaps still remain.

Using a fuller range of indicators: All the Achieving the Dream states should include in their performance accountability systems measures for successful remediation, post-transfer success beyond just the GPA, and – something that none does now – successful movement from the noncredit to the credit program. These success measures should be balanced with measures of race and income diversity of student enrollment, in order to insure that colleges do not try to secure higher remedial success and retention and graduation rates by quietly making it harder for less prepared students – who tend to be less advantaged – to enter the community college (Dougherty & Hong, 2005; in press).

Breaking down performance data consistently by income and race: The states are quite spotty in breaking down performance indicators – at least in public reports – by student race and – particularly – income. Yet, without such breakdowns, state agencies and local colleges remain unaware of the direction and size of inequalities. To be sure, getting a measure of income is very hard given that many students do not fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). However, alternatives – albeit imperfect ones – are available, such as the use of the average income of a student’s zip code area.

Measuring state use of performance data: The evidence is very uneven that state officials do use performance accountability data in their own decision making. One way to encourage this is to develop measures of use of performance data by state officials.

Funding and otherwise supporting the institutional research efforts of community colleges: While community colleges do show more evidence of taking performance data into account, there remains the fact that this practice is more difficult for under-resourced colleges for whom having a full-time, much less a well financed and well trained, institutional research capacity is at issue. Thus, there is a need for state funding of information technology infrastructure at the colleges and for training and technical assistance for institutional researchers.

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ENDNOTES

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² We talked to Katherine Boswell formerly of the Education Commission of the States, Kay McClenney of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas, Davis Jenkins of the University of Illinois-Chicago, Christopher Mazzeo then of the National Governors Association, Richard Kazis of Jobs for the Future, Frank Newman, Lara Couturier, and Jamie Scurry of the Futures Project, Sarah Rubin of MDC, Inc., Katherine Hughes and Tom Bailey of the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Patricia Windham of the Florida Department of Education, and Frank Renz of the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges.

³ The research and policy organizations included the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University, The Institute for Higher Education Policy, the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the State Higher Education Executive Officers, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Particularly useful were the state policy reports developed by the Center for Community College Policy at ECS and the State Policy Inventory Database Online (SPIDO) of WICHE.

⁴ The figure for Black, non-Hispanics was 76% (Ingels et al., 2002).

⁵ Meanwhile, among high school graduates in 1992 who entered the community college within the next two years, 62% had secured a college degree or attended a four-year college, but the figures for Blacks, Hispanics, and students in the lowest quartile in socioeconomic status (SES) were only 51%, 47%, and 51%, respectively. This study went on to analyze income and race differences in degree attainment and transfer to four-year colleges among students who entered the community college with the intention of receiving a degree. Once high school preparation and number of risk factors for high school and college dropout were controlled, SES and race differences in degree attainment and attendance at four-year colleges ceased to be significant. This underscores the importance of class and race differences in high school preparation and presence of dropout risk factors in creating class and race differences in degree attainment and transfer. The college risk factors analyzed were delayed college enrollment, part-time attendance, completion only of a high school certificate or GED, working full time when first enrolled, and being a parent (particularly a single parent) while enrolled in college (Hoachlander, Sikora, & Horn, 2003).

⁶ More specifically, we first broke the community colleges into three categories by urbanicity: urban (city or large town), suburban, and rural or small town. For each category, we calculated two statistics: the mean proportion minority (nonwhite) of the student body and the mean proportion receiving Pell grants. We then selected colleges that were as close as possible to each of those two means. We qualified this selection, however, to include at least one college that was part of the Achieving the Dream initiative and to ensure that the colleges were not all concentrated in one area of the state.

⁷ This estimate controlled for differences between states in financial aid spending and state unemployment rate.

⁸ Based on Edward St. John's analysis of the national High School and Beyond dataset. The study controlled for student socioeconomic background, high school grades, tested ability, and curricular track.

⁹ The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has passed a resolution to keep tuition down. Moreover, the state requires colleges to put a portion of their tuition into what is called the Texas Public Education Grants, which are then awarded as need-based aid to students. The Virginia Community College System master plan commits the system to never charge more than half the average price of attending a four-year college. (For more details see the Texas and Virginia chapters.)

¹⁰ These figures are for all state aid and are not restricted to community colleges.

¹¹ Florida's part-time aid program is a specific provision of its larger Florida Student Aid Grant program.

¹² One way that states do fund short courses is through their contract training programs, which we will discuss here. But these are largely restricted to the noncredit side of the community college.

¹³ These figures are, if anything, an underestimate. The federal survey relies on college self-reports and these may be biased downwards for a number of reasons. Colleges may under-report actual numbers in remedial classes out of a desire to not appear substandard. Moreover, many courses may be indeed remedial but not considered or reported so by a college. For example, colleges vary in whether they consider ESL courses as remedial. Moreover, courses that

are typically college level may be informally converted into remedial when instructor finds students skills are too low. Yet, the students in such informally remedialized courses are not reported as remedial. Finally, remedial courses are often given by colleges euphemistic titles and designations that hide their true nature from students and, perhaps not infrequently, the institutional researchers filling out the federal survey (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2002; Dougherty, 2002; Grubb et al., 1999).

¹⁴ In fact, there is still debate over whether remediation even helps students. Adelman (1998) found that the more remediation a student received, the less likely they were to graduate. However, more recent studies – using sophisticated controls for the fact that remedial students are likely to be quite different from nonremedial students in ways that will affect later student success – have found positive effects of remediation, though they are still not very large (Bettinger & Long, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

¹⁵ However, at least two of the states (New Mexico and Texas) will not provide funding for students to take adult basic education courses

¹⁶ One of the readers of this chapter raised the question whether this apparent exemption of occupational students was only from the College Placement Test. Occupational students are required to take the Test for Adult Basic Education.

¹⁷ North Carolina has decided on explicit cut-off scores but it has not yet announced them as of this writing.

¹⁸ We should note that none of the states prohibits students from taking any non-remedial courses while receiving remediation. However, what is missing is a strong state encouragement of students progressing in the skills areas where they do not need remediation even as they work on being remediated. We should also note that we do not know of any direct evidence backing up the utility of this policy. This would be a very fruitful area for research using state unit-record longitudinal data.

¹⁹ There are studies that find that students participating in dual enrollment programs are better prepared for college (as marked by lower rates of remediation and higher college grades) than those who do not participate in dual enrollment programs. However, virtually none of these studies controls for differences between students participating and not participating in dual enrollment – in social background, previous academic performance, educational and occupational aspirations, and so forth – that may account for the apparent effect of dual enrollment (Bailey & Karp, 2003).

²⁰ However, it appears that in at least one state, the community college system has avoided asking for funds earmarked for guidance and counseling for fear such an earmark will provide an obvious target for legislative cutbacks (Richard Kazis, personal communication).

²¹ New Mexico is a partial exception in that community college staffers who provide non-academic counseling must be licensed under the New Mexico Counseling and Therapy Practice Act of 1997, which provides some guidelines for practice.

²² This lack of state standards for counseling and guidance may reflect a state fear – similar to that which has long governed instructional policy – of infringing on professional prerogatives and of constraining institutional autonomy. If so, this fear is understandable, but it must be noted that it has resulted in an absence of state leadership in a crucial area of community college activity.

²³ Among college entrants in 1995-96 in the Beginning Postsecondary Student Survey (BPS:96), 51% of those who entered public two-year colleges with the intent to transfer did so by fall 2001 (Hoachlander et al., 2003). One reason this figure is higher than that for the BPS:89 is no doubt the increasing aspirations of college entrants. However, the difference is probably also due to the fact that the aspiration variable being used in BPS:96 is desire to transfer from the community college rather than the less definite BPS:90 measure of desire to eventually attain a baccalaureate degree or higher.

²⁴ Transfer is defined in that study as ever enrolling in a four-year college after beginning higher education in a public two-year college.

²⁵ Florida does have an elaborate state computer-based advising system: Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students (FACTS.org). The other states, besides New Mexico, also have some web-based advising, but it is much less developed than Florida's.

²⁶ Virginia has done state policy work in all these areas but it has not crystallized to the same degree as in the other states. It has made efforts to define a transferable general education core but it is still not mandatory as in the case of the other states. It has stated that the public four year colleges should give associate degree graduates junior standing and treat them as having met all lower-division general education requirements, but this is not mandatory. Virginia has worked out common prerequisites for transfer between majors between the community colleges and Old Dominion University and is working on similar agreements with the other state universities. However, these are at

best bilateral agreements between the community college system and individual public universities and not systemwide compacts as is the case in the other states. However, all of these developments seem to be accelerating and deepening with the advent of the state's recently established performance funding system. By making transfer rates one of its measures of institutional excellence for four-year colleges, this system is spurring those colleges to actively work with the community colleges to improve the transfer process.

²⁷ These efforts are still in their early stages. While Texas has developed 60-credit Field of Study Curricula in a many different occupational areas, the other states have much less well developed efforts, at best encompassing only a few majors such as nursing or early childhood education.

²⁸ The importance of improving the transfer of occupational credits is highlighted by the finding of Dougherty and Kienzl (2006) that – even with controls for differences in student background, precollege preparation, and educational and occupational aspirations – occupational majors are still significantly less likely to transfer than academic majors.

²⁹ Across 39 states, 37% of the organizations providing adult education are community colleges and over half of community colleges are providing adult education (Morest, 2004).

³⁰ The study participants consisted of adults age 25 and older with a high school education or less and youth age 18-24 who lacked a high school diploma or GED who enrolled in the Washington State community colleges in 1996-97 or 1997-98. All told, 40% had a GED or high school diploma and 60% had less than a high school degree (Prince and Jenkins, 2005: 8, 10, 18).

³¹ Florida has supported the development of an articulation agreement regarding transfer of credits between area vocational centers (which cannot offer college credits) and community colleges.

³² The Washington State study found that – among adult noncredit students who transitioned into the credit program – only 18% of those starting in ESL and 28% of those starting in ABE received financial aid once they got into the credit program (Prince and Jenkins, 2005).

³³ While the rise of the community college workforce role is usually presented as simply a response to student demand and employer demand and societal need, the origins are considerably more complex. Very important as well have been the interest of community colleges in differentiating themselves from the universities, securing funding and political support from business, and responding to the desire of government officials to spur local economic growth (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Dougherty, 1994; Dougherty & Bakia, 2000).

³⁴ These data are not publicly reported. They are part of the performance reporting data that go to community colleges themselves.

³⁵ New Mexico did establish a Performance Incentive Fund in 2003 but it has yet to be voted funds by the state Legislature.

³⁶ The data discussed above do not control for demographic, educational, and economic differences between states that might be swamping any program effects. Moreover, with the exception of Florida, the performance funding systems examined typically have not involved much money or operated long. But even if one were to control for the factors discussed above, there is the distinct possibility that performance funding may simply not prove all that important. There is reason to believe that community colleges are already responsive to performance accountability in the form of performance reporting, so that fiscal incentives may not add all that much impact, unless very large funds are at risk.

³⁷ However, it is interesting that five states that had performance accountability systems addressing transfer (Florida, Texas, Illinois, California, and Washington) generally had bigger increases in the number of transfers than did New York, which has not had a state performance accountability system.

³⁸ There is some validity to this criticism, but it is also important to reaffirm that the great majority of community college students enter with the intention of securing a degree (Berkner et al., 2002). Moreover, an important mission of the community college is to “warm up” the aspirations of disadvantaged students who are not thinking of getting a degree but are capable of it and would certainly benefit from it.

APPENDIX:

TAXONOMY OF STATE ACCESS AND SUCCESS POLICIES

A. STATE FINANCES

- * state share of CC revenues

B. ACCESS POLICIES

1. Public Commitment to Equal Access

- * mission statements
- * legislation
- * blue ribbon commissions
- * explicit policy goals
- * public statements by key figures
- * K-16 programs

2. Specific Policies

a. Admissions policies

- * open door admissions
- * access for undocumented students
- * no caps or restrictions on enrollments

b. Tuition and fees

- * tuition
- * net cost for family in lower 40% of income
- * keeping down tuition and fees
- * tuition for undocumented students

c. Student aid targeted to disadvantaged students

- * need based grant aid
- * aid specifically for minority students
- * aid for part-time students
- * eligibility of undocumented immigrants
- * linking aid to tuition (i.e., as tuition rises, student aid rises)

d. Outreach to potential minority and low-income students

- * K-16 programs
- * early intervention programs
- * dual enrollment programs

e. Comprehensive curriculum likely to attract non-traditional students

- * regular occupational education
- * adult education
- * welfare to work

f. Convenient access

- * time (i.e., evening and weekend classes)
- * place (i.e., locations near where students live)
- * distance education
- * short courses, modularization

C. SUCCESS POLICIES**1. Public Commitment to Equal Outcomes**

- * mission statements
- * legislation
- * blue ribbon commissions
- * explicit policy goals
- * public statements by key figures

2. Specific Policies**a. Remediation**

- * financing
- * whether mandatory entry-level assessment
- * content and cut-off scores for remedial assessment
- * whether those failing placement test are required to take remediation
- * whether students taking remediation in one subject can take college level course in another
- * applicability of student aid to remedial education
- * how often or long students can take remediation and receive student financial aid
- * size, type, and quality of remediation programming
- * what constitutes success in remediation (exit requirements)
- * credit for remedial courses
- * community college-high school collaboration to improve high school preparation

b. Academic counseling and guidance

- * funding
- * state standards e.g. what kinds can be offered, who can counsel, what is the counselor/counselee ratio, what should be the frequency of contact with students

c. Nonacademic support

- * funding
- * state standards e.g. what kinds can be offered, who can counsel, what is the counselor/counselee ratio, what should be the frequency of contact with students

d. Transfer assistance

- * student aid earmarked for transfer students
- * transfer advising: state provided programs
- * transfer advising: funding for community college advising

- * transfer advising: standards (e.g., what kinds can be offered, who can advise, what is the advisor/advisee ratio, what should be the frequency of contact with students)
- * transfer of associate degrees
- * vocational transfer
- * general education transfer
- * common prerequisites for majors
- * common course numbering

e. Baccalaureate provision

- * whether state funds or otherwise encourages 4-year colleges to offer upper-division courses at community colleges
- * whether state allows community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees on their own

f. Noncredit to credit articulation: state support for community colleges facilitating student movement from noncredit to credit programs

g. Workforce and economic development: state funding or other encouragement of community college involvement in economic development.

D. PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Appropriate Indicators (broken down by race-ethnicity and social class) on:

- * access by minority students
- * access by low-income students
- * persistence to second semester or second year
- * successful remediation
- * graduation (degree & certificate)
- * graduation efficiency (time to degree)
- * transfer readiness
- * transfer
- * success after transfer
- * job placement
- * job retention
- * wage placement
- * passage of licensure exams
- * student realization of goals
- * community college's contribution to creation of career pathways for nontraditional students (e.g. movement of adult students from noncredit to credit program)
- * community college's contribution to job creation and economic development

2. Data collection procedures: data warehouse, etc.

3. Connection of performance indicators to state funding

4. Evaluation: Use of data

- * use by state to craft state policies affecting community college access and success
- * use by community colleges in decision making

TABLE 1
STATE POLICIES AFFECTING STUDENT ACCESS TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Dougherty, Reid, and Nienhusser

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| A. STATE CONTEXT | | | | | |
| * CC share of credit enrollments (2001) | 51% | 55% | 48% | 51% | 44% |
| * state share of CC revenues | 64% (2003-04) | 58% (2003-04) | 67% (2003-04) | 37% (2000-01) | 44% (2003-04) |
| * estimated percentage change in number of high school graduates, 2002-2018 | 30% | -7% | 31% | 30% | 18% |
| B. ACCESS POLICIES | | | | | |
| 1. Public Commitment to Equal Access e.g. mission statements, legislation, blue ribbon commissions, explicit policy goals, or public statements by key figures, K-16 programs | Commissioner of Education and the Chancellor of Community Colleges have made public commitment to greater access for minority and, particularly, low-income students. | The 2003-04 Governor's Task Force on Higher Education declared importance of increasing participation of minority and low-income students. | NC CC System has launched a Minority Male Mentoring Program to increase graduation and retention rates among minority men and a Hispanic Initiative to increase the number of employment training programs available to Hispanic students. | Gov. Rick Perry has made greater access a priority of his administration. Second, the much publicized "Closing the Gaps" initiative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2000) is committed to sharply increasing by 2015 rates of college participation for Latinos and Blacks. However, local CC officials complain that, although CC's are expected to accommodate the majority of the additional students, they have received no additional funding from the state for such an increase. | State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) has stated it is committed to provide access to "historically underserved populations." However, there are few examples of clear commitments to specific underserved populations, particularly those demarcated by race or income. In its 2003 master plan, the Virginia Community College System does not mention equalizing race or income disparities in CC access. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| 2. Specific Policies | | | | | |
| a. admissions policies | | | | | |
| * open door admissions | Yes, state policy. Open to those without HS degree. But cannot go into college credit programs until get GED and pass placement exam. Question has been raised about number being denied access to the CC by fact that CC's cannot staff enough course sections. | No state policy mandating that community colleges have open door admissions. Rather, it is a matter of well established custom. The expectation is that institutions will admit all students with a high school diploma or GED. If students do not have a GED, they can acquire one at the community college and then move into college-credit programs. | Yes, state policy. N.C. colleges are required by state law to admit all applicants who are H.S. graduates or at least age 18. If students don't have a high school degree, they can enter a GED program and, if successful, they can then move into college level courses. Because students in H.S. Compensatory Education now receive the standard H.S. diploma, some CC's won't admit them. | Yes, state policy. Texas law requires that CC's admit all high school graduates who are 17 years old or older or, regardless of degree, anyone who is eighteen years or older. Some question whether students are being denied access because of space and staff limitations at CC's. | Yes, state policy. Those eligible for general admission are high school graduates, or the equivalent, or people who are at least eighteen years of age and able to benefit from the CC. |
| * undocumented students guaranteed access to community colleges. | No state policy. Undocumented immigrants are not guaranteed access to community colleges by state law, but they are also not barred. Their admission is left to local decision by community colleges | Yes, state policy. | Some state policy. Undocumented immigrants are not guaranteed access to community colleges by state law, but they are also not barred. This is left to local discretion by the community colleges. However, In 2001, the CC System issued memorandum to all CC's allowing them to admit undocumented students to dual-enrollment and noncredit Basic Skills courses. And in 2004, the NCCCS issued a memorandum permitting CC's to enroll undocumented students in credit-bearing academic programs. | Yes, state policy. Texas law requires that CC's admit all high school graduates who are 17 years old or older or, regardless of degree, anyone who is eighteen years or older. This includes undocumented immigrants, who are guaranteed admission by state law to community colleges. CC's can create prerequisites for courses and deny access to courses when there are not enough course sections. | No state policy. The state does not guarantee access to undocumented immigrants. In 2002, the state Attorney General issued an opinion that public colleges should not admit undocumented students. In 2005, a bill was introduced in the Legislature -- though it failed in the Senate -- to ban the enrollment of undocumented immigrants. While many CC's have followed the Attorney General's opinion, others have chosen to admit undocumented students. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| b. tuition and fees | | | | | |
| * instate tuition (2005-06) | \$1,915 | \$1,191 | \$1,264 | \$1,493 | \$2,135 |
| * net cost: percent of median income of families in lower 40% of income | 38% (2004) | 33% (2004) | 32% (2004) | 32% (2004) | 29% (2004) |
| * keeping down tuition and fees | Yes. Each local community college board of trustees establishes tuition and fees, but they cannot be more than 15% above or 10% below the combined total of the fee schedule adopted by the state Legislature and the technology fee adopted by the local board of trustees. | Yes. CC's set their own tuition rates, but are subject to some state control: the Dept. of Higher Education can reject a CC's budget; and the legislature influences tuition rates through the tuition amount it expects CC's to charge and that is deducted from their state appropriations. The state government does not have an explicit state policy directed toward keeping CC tuition rates low. However, perhaps because of the state influences above, the average tuition increase was 5% per year over 11 years. | Yes. All tuition and registration fees must be approved by the State Board for Community Colleges. There is no formal state policy that seeks to keep community colleges affordable. However, there is a commitment by the legislature to keep tuition and fees down. They don't raise the rates as often for community colleges as for four-year public universities. | Yes. There is a THECB resolution to keep tuition down. | Yes. State officials have made a commitment in the CC strategic plan to keep tuition at no more than one half the average price to attend a four-year college. But this commitment is not inscribed in law. |
| * undocumented students eligible for instate tuition | Not eligible for instate tuition. Legislation was introduced in 2003, 2004, and 2005 but was not passed. | Yes, eligible. In 2005, the legislature passed a new law allowing CC's to charge undocumented immigrants instate tuition. | Not eligible. Bill introduced, but failed, in 2005 providing instate tuition for undocumented immigrants at CC's and the University of North Carolina if they had attended N.C. high schools for at least four consecutive years before graduation and applied for legal immigration status. | Yes, eligible. Under a 2001 act, CC's can charge instate tuition to these students if they graduated from a Texas high school, have lived in the state for at least three years, and have signed an affidavit that they will apply for permanent residence as soon as they are eligible | Not eligible. State Attorney General issued opinion in 2002 that undocumented students should not be admitted and, if admitted, should pay out-of-state tuition. In 2003, state legislature passed bill -- vetoed by the governor -- to ban any individual illegally in the US from being eligible for in-state tuition or any other post-secondary benefit. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| c. student aid targeted to disadvantaged students e.g. | | | | | |
| * need based grant aid | 23% went to need-based grants (2003-04). Call for more need-based aid. | 30% went to need-based grants (2003-04). Call for more need-based aid. | 50% went to need-based grants (2003-04). | 83% went to need-based grants (2003-04). Call for more money for CC students, who are largely not eligible for large TEXAS Grant Program. Also call for aid for adult students who don't have a degree. | 58% went to need-based grants (2003-04). |
| * aid for part-time students | Yes dedicated aid. FSAG Public Part-Time Program is for students who take at least 6 hours per term in an associate's program. (Remainder of FSAG requires students to enroll for 12 or more credits.) | No state student aid funds directly targeted for such students. However, most state aid programs allow students who attend half-time (defined as 6 credits a semester) to be eligible | Yes dedicated aid. The Less Than Half Time Program offers need-based assistance to students enrolled less than half time in certificate, diploma, or associate degree programs. Also, PT students are eligible for the N.C. CC Grant Program if enrolled for at least six credits. | No dedicated program for part-time students, but they are eligible under the general state student aid programs. Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program is open to students taking at least six credits. TEXAS Grant Program is open to students taking nine credits or more. | Yes dedicated aid. VCCS Part-Time Assistance Program for students taking 3-5 credits. Also, students can qualify for the College Scholarship Assistance Program and the Virginia Commonwealth Award Program if enrolled at least half-time. |
| * eligibility of undocumented immigrants | Not eligible. | Yes, eligible. In 2005, the legislature passed a new law allowing undocumented immigrants access to state lottery student aid. | Not eligible. | Yes, eligible. Under 2001 act, they are eligible for state student aid if they have been state residents for three years, graduated from a Texas high school, and have signed an affidavit that they will apply for permanent residence as soon as eligible. | Not eligible. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| *linking aid to tuition: as tuition rises, student aid rises | Yes, but linkage is only in case of Bright Futures merit-based program. | No formal linkage, though state attempts to increase aid if tuition increases. However, this does not always occur. | No formal linkage, though the General Assembly has increased the North Carolina Community College Grant program funds to match the percentage increase in tuition. | Yes. The state requires colleges to put a portion of their tuition into what is called the Texas Public Education Grants, which are then awarded as need-based aid to students. | Yes. State has informal policy of linking aid to tuition increases, with goal of meeting 50% of student's remaining need (cost of attendance minus federal aid, family contribution, and known scholarships). However, only meeting 35% of remaining need statewide. |
| d. outreach to potential students | | | | | |
| * early intervention programs | Yes. Several programs: CROP (intervention in 6-12th grades); FACTS (online advising); Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement (early identification through administration of PSAT or Common Placement Test); College Goal Sunday. | Yes. The state runs a federally funded GEAR UP program. Also there is a small ENLACE (Engaging Latino Communities for Education) program – funded by the state and the Kellogg Foundation -- for outreach activities to Hispanic students, with these funds going to universities as well as community colleges. There is no mandate from the state specifically for outreach to K-12 students. This activity is expected as part of the operating budgets received. | Yes. The College Foundation of North Carolina – an initiative of the North Carolina community college system, the University of North Carolina, and the North Carolina independent colleges – runs a website and toll-free number to give students and parents information on college opportunities, application procedures, and financial aid. The state also has a state GEAR UP grant and five GEAR UP partnership programs serving 27 of 100 counties. | Yes. The state sponsors (1) Education. Go Get It (Go) – run by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Bd. and the Texas Education Agency -- for students as early as the 7th and 8th grades; (2) the THECB runs College Enrollment Workshops for students in high school with low college going rates; (3) the THECB operates Higher Education Assistance Pilot Program for students from high schools with low college-going rates; (4) TEA operates GEAR UP program for middle school and high school students and their parents. | Yes. There is strong encouragement for CC's to reach out to high school students, but no explicit state policy or mandate. The state administers a federally funded GEAR UP program. There is a pilot program, "Education for a Lifetime," which addresses both high performing students and students who need more help. And the state provides access to the federal College Opportunities On-Line (COOL) program, which provides information about colleges, paying for college, etc. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| * dual-enrollment programs | <p>Yes. Program in place since 1973. Applies to courses creditable toward a vocational certificate, associate degree, or baccalaureate degree. To be eligible, students must pass the Common Placement Test and hold a minimum 3.0 unweighted GPA (for students enrolling in vocational certificate courses, the requirement is a minimum 2.0 unweighted GPA). Dually enrolled students are not assessed student fees. Issues facing the dual-enrollment program are insufficient enrollment of minority students and whether the growing popularity of Advanced Placement will cut into dual enrollment.</p> | <p>Yes. State law allows qualified high school students to take postsecondary courses for dual credit at college campuses (Laws of 1990, chap. 25). All the community colleges participate. A community college can count a dual-enrolled student as part of its enrollment for state funding purposes. In about a third of the cases, the community college does not charge tuition. When tuition is charged, about half the time it is paid by the high school and about half the time by the student. Some concern that high schools have not been paying their share of tuition and allowing enough students to take dual-credit courses.</p> | <p>Yes. Two forms: (1) CC's and local public schools permit high school students to take college level academic, technical, and advanced vocational courses at the H.S. at no charge; (2) CC's run Dual/Concurrent Enrollment programs to allow H.S. students to enroll at the CC in credit programs or noncredit continuing education courses at no charge. CC's do not charge tuition of dual-enrolled students but get regular FTE-based state funding for those students. The NCCCS has also implemented an initiative (Learn and Earn) involving new high schools – primarily on community college campuses – that will allow students to graduate after five years with both a high school diploma and either a CC associate degree or two years of college credit.</p> | <p>Yes. 1995 legislation permits high school students to attend college classes at community colleges and receive both high school and college credit. Students must meet the same requirements as college entrants who place out of remediation. Both high schools and colleges receive funding for dual-credit programs. CC's can waive tuition but don't always.</p> | <p>Yes. Since 1988. The state supports dual enrollment by allowing both CC's and public schools to receive state funding. The state encourages courses to be offered at no cost to the student but final decisions about tuition and fees are left to the colleges. In 2004, the state began strong push for dual enrollment as part of Governor Warner's Senior Year Initiative. Hope is to have college aspirants leave H.S. with at least a semester's worth of college credit. Four-year colleges agreed to accept up to 13 credits in three areas (biology, U.S. history, psychology) and the public colleges agreed to accept even more credits in other subject areas (English, economics, physics, math, art history, and music appreciation).</p> |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| e. comprehensive curriculum | | | | | |
| * regular occupational education | Yes. Statutory mandate and funding. The state education code states that the mission of the CC includes "preparing students directly for careers requiring less than baccalaureate degrees. This may include preparing for job entry, supplementing of skills and knowledge, and responding to needs in new areas of technology." | Yes. State funding. The notion that community colleges should provide occupational education came later to New Mexico than other states. But in 2003, the state created a Work Force Skills Development Fund to provide matching grants to community colleges for the development, expansion, and support of high-skills entry-level training programs. | Yes. State mandate and funding. N.C. statutes state that the "major purpose of each and every institution ... shall be and shall continue to be the offering of vocational and technical education and training, and of basic, high school level, academic education needed in order to profit from vocational and technical education." | Yes. State mandate and funding. State law (Education Code 130.003(e)) provides that one of the purposes of the CC shall be to provide: (1) Technical programs up to two years in length leading to associate degrees or certificates. (2) Vocational programs leading directly to employment in semi-skilled and skilled occupations. | Yes. State mandate and funding. State regulations governing the establishment of the community colleges require that they maintain a program of occupational education. |
| * adult education | Yes. State funding and statutory provision for ABE, ASE, GED, vocational preparation, ESOL/ESL, workplace readiness, and adults with disabilities. Both CC's and school districts provide adult education, with latter actually providing more. The Adult General Education program is funded through state and federal funds. Florida state education code puts adult education in a "secondary role" for CC's (along with community services and recreational and leisure services) but also states that postsecondary academic and career education programs and adult general education programs shall have "first priority" in CC funding. | Yes, state funding. About three-quarters of ABE and ESL services are delivered through the community colleges. The state funds ABE -- about \$5.45 million -- by formula. The state also funds the Coalition for Literacy and most colleges partner with it for additional literacy services. | Yes, state funding and state mandate. A 2005 law designates the CC System Office as the primary lead agency for delivering adult literacy training and adult education programs in the state. The Basic Skills program includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), (3) Adult High School (AHS), (4) English Literacy/English as a Second Language (ESL), and (5) Compensatory Education (CED). The state funds Basic Skills on an FTE basis, at 84% as much funding per course unit as for credit courses. | Yes. State mandate and funding. State law holds that one of the CC purposes is to provide adult literacy and other basic skills programs. Adult Basic Education (ABE) funding goes to the Texas Education Agency, the state's education department. However, CC's make up 27 of the 54 fiscal agents receiving funds from Texas Education Agency, and 43 CC's actually do provide it. There is some CC unhappiness with how TEA handles ABE. | Yes, state funding but this is not a major community college offering. Funding goes to the State Department of Education. Community colleges get involved only if local school boards contract with them. The state chancellor for CC's is pushing to have most of adult basic education (ABE) shifted to the community colleges. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| f. convenient access: | | | | | |
| * time e.g. evening and weekend classes | No state policy. | No state policy. | No state policy. | No state policy. | No state policy. |
| * place e.g. locations near where students live | No state policy. | No state policy. | No state mandate but funding. The state has provided extra funding to cover the overhead costs of satellite facilities. | No state policy. | No state policy. |
| * distance education | Yes. State funds distance education enrollments through the state basic FTE funding formula. They receive the same level of funding as other forms of instruction. State supported Florida Virtual Campus provides a single online environment for all of Florida's postsecondary students. | Yes. State funding. Colleges receive the same amount of state formula aid for enrollments in distance education as in regular on-campus courses. The New Mexico Virtual College was appropriated \$475,000 in 2005. It is nonrecurring money to be used to build student support for the virtual college. | Yes. State funding. State's Virtual Learning Community (VLC) assists colleges in offering distance learning courses. Also state System staff manage other types of distance learning delivery systems. State pays for staff and instructional expenses and line charges; facilities and maintenance costs are picked up by the counties. | Yes. State funding. Distance education students generate the same per FTE state funding as do on campus students. State operates portal for students to find out what electronic courses are available statewide. | Yes. Distance education enrollments receive state funding through enrollment-based funding mechanism. The VCCS operates a webpage where students can find out about online courses at the CC's. The Virginia legislature also funds the Teletechnet program, by which Old Dominion University offers upper-division courses at CC's. |

TABLE 2
STATE POLICIES AFFECTING STUDENT SUCCESS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Dougherty, Reid, and Nienhusser

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| SUCCESS POLICIES 1. Public Commitment to Equal Outcomes e.g. mission statements, legislation, blue ribbon commissions, explicit policy goals, or public statements by key figures | <p>The Chancellor of Community Colleges has noted: "Community colleges must and will work toward closing the current performance gaps among different groups of students." However, no explicit targets have been set as in Texas.</p> | <p>Gov. Richardson charged a Governor's Task Force on Higher Education: "It is imperative that the State of New Mexico address its Citizens' grave concerns regarding low completion rates of students entering the two and four year college programs." One of the Task Force's five subcommittees focused on student success. However, New Mexico has not implemented success policies specifically directed toward minority and low-income students.</p> | <p>The 2003-2005 NCCCS System Plan states as one goal addressing "increasingly diverse learners' needs through innovative nontraditional and traditional programs." Within this goal, one stated objective is to implement strategies that promote participant success. However, these goals and objectives are not stated specifically for minority and low-income students. The community college system has recently launched the Minority Male Mentoring Program, which intends to increase graduation and retention rates among minority men in the NC CC System.</p> | <p>The second goal of the Closing the Gaps initiative has been by 2015 to increase by 50 percent the number of degrees, certificates and other identifiable student successes from high quality programs. As part of this the state has set a goal to increase the number of Black and Hispanic students completing either a bachelor's degree, associate degree, or certificate between 2000 and 2015.</p> | <p>The Virginia community college system has made in its 2003 strategic plan a clear commitment to improving the success of its students. Whatever the strength of commitment to improving student success, it is not stated specifically in terms of equalizing disparities by race and income.</p> |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| 2. Specific Policies | | | | | |
| a. remediation: | | | | | |
| * financing | Yes. Funded by regular FTE enrollment system. CC's receive state formula aid for up to two student attempts at a given remediation course. After that, colleges do not receive state funding. Colleges can still allow a student to take a remedial course for a third time but are allowed to charge the student for the full cost of instruction, though they may reduce fees on an individual basis contingent on the student's financial hardship. | Yes. CC remedial education is eligible for funding through the higher education funding formula. New Mexico does not set a credit hour limit on how many remedial courses a student can take and still have those courses be state subsidized. | Yes. Remediation qualifies for general state funding. No state limit on how often student can take remedial course and CC get state FTE funding. But, as with all for-credit courses, CC's must set and adhere to a policy on course repetition. | Yes. Funded by regular FTE enrollment system. There is a limit of 27 credit hours on how much remedial education the state will fund. If a student is still not proficient after 27 hours, the state will no longer provide funding (the CC cannot report the student for FTE funding). In 2005, the Legislature authorized CC's to charge higher tuitions at that point. | Yes. The state funds developmental education -- as with any other credit-based course -- through an enrollment-based funding formula. Virginia will not provide state funding for remedial courses taken more than two times. However, students can get permission from the Vice President for Academic Affairs at a community college to take a course for more than a second time. If they get permission, the student is counted in enrollment figures. Moreover, even without permission, there is no state policy for determining whether students are taking a course more than twice. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| * whether mandatory entry-level assessment | Yes. Students intending to pursue an AA program must take the College Placement Test unless they have a high enough score on the SAT or ACT. They must complete any remediation needed before starting their program. Students intending on pursuing an occupational program must take the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) and must complete any remediation before they finish their program. However, there is evidence that not all students get assessed. A study of two colleges in Florida found that one did not test most occupational students. Moreover, that same college waited till students had declared a major before testing them. | No state policy. There are no state level requirements or guidelines that determine whether assessment is mandatory or what form it takes. The state permits institutions to make up their policies with regard to whether there is mandatory entry level testing. | Yes. State Board adopted mandatory entry-level testing, but there is no state policy providing (or forbidding) exemption if students have achieved a certain level on the SAT or ACT; this is a matter of institutional policy. By state law, students are exempted from placement testing if they have passed the placement exam or passed the first level college-credit program in, say, mathematics or English at another CC. However, some CC's have not been honoring this requirement. | Yes. By state law, colleges must test every student upon entry. However, students who have attained certain minimum scores on the high school exit exam, SAT, or ACT -- about 8-12% of students -- are exempted. Students must pass the test before accumulating 60 semester credit hours. However, not all colleges test every non-exempt student in all subjects. A study of two Texas CC's found that one of them did not assess students' writing skills. | Yes. There is mandatory assessment, but students presenting the right SAT and ACT scores (as determined by the colleges) can be exempted. Even without SAT or ACT scores, not all students are tested in all skills areas. Apparently some colleges waive testing if a student already has a BA degree and students are not tested in skill areas that are not required for their major (e.g. reading if they are in a vocational major that does not have a College English prerequisite or a placement test score in reading). And even if they need to be tested in reading, students can delay this until they have to take a course that has such a prerequisite. The state has not standardized the prerequisites for different programs |
| * content and cut-off scores for remedial assessment | Yes. State has chosen the common placement test and sets the cutoff scores. | No state policy. State allows colleges to decide what exams are used and what cut-off scores determine if a student is placed in remediation. | Yes. The state has determined which exams can be used for entry level testing (Asset, Compass, and CPT/Accuplacer). Recently, the State Board decided what minimum scores are necessary to constitute passage of those exams, but those scores have not yet been announced | Yes. CC's choose placement exam from among four tests (the Texas Higher Education Assessment, Accuplacer, Compass, Asset), but state sets minimum cut-off scores. Significant number of CC's (30% for math; 8% for reading, 15% for writing) require higher passing scores. Students must pass test before accumulating 60 credits. | Yes. The CC System has set which entrance exams are to be used (ASSET, COMPASS) and the range within which cut-off scores must fall. However, it has not mandated a particular threshold number, leaving that to the colleges to determine. This has caused difficulty when students move between adjacent CC's with different cutoff scores. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
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| * whether those failing test are required to take remediation | Yes. If a student fails a section of the Common Placement Test, they are required to take remediation in that area. However, state rules are not always followed. A study of two CC's found that one issued waivers from remediation if it did not have space for all the students requiring remediation and, if a student failed the placement test in two areas, that CC only required remediation in one. Meanwhile, the other CC allowed students to take the CPT repeatedly until they passed it. | No state policy. | No state policy. Decisions as to whether those failing the entrance test are required to take remediation are left to the institutions. | No state requirement. Under new state policy, CC's have discretion. Students can delay remediation courses and try to pass the test again the next semester. Also, CC's have discretion on whether students failing the placement exam must take remediation. In a survey by the THECB, one-third of CC's report no longer requiring mandatory developmental education for students failing the remedial assessment test. | Yes. There is mandatory placement in remediation if students fail the entrance exam. And students are supposed to not take more than 12 credit hours before they begin their remediation. However, students do get around these state rules according to state and local officials. |
| * whether students taking remediation in one subject can take college level course in another | Yes. Students taking remedial courses are allowed by state rules to enroll in non-remedial courses so long as the latter do not require skills being addressed in the remedial courses. However, at one Florida CC, instructors sometimes overrode course prerequisites to allow remedial students to take college-level courses they would ordinarily be barred from. Students aspiring to an associate degree or higher must successfully complete their remedial courses before accumulating 12 hours of lower-division college credit coursework. | No state policy. | No state policy. Decisions as to whether those taking remediation in one subject can take college-level courses in another are left to the institutions. | No state policy. With the advent of the Texas Success Initiative, students are no longer prohibited from taking college-level courses concurrent with remedial courses. | Yes, some state policy. There is no state regulation, but the state has encouraged colleges to identify college-level courses that students can take while they are being remediated in another area. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
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| * applicability of student aid to remedial education | Yes. Students can receive state aid while taking remedial courses. | Yes. Students are eligible for state student aid if remedial education is offered for credit. Students are not eligible for state aid if they are taking Adult Basic Education courses. | Yes. | Yes, but not if students are taking adult basic education. A problem with this is that students end up in developmental courses when they really belong in ABE because they need financial aid. | Yes. Students are eligible for student aid even if taking only remedial courses. |
| * how often or long students can take remediation and receive student financial aid | No state policy. | No state policy. | | | Yes. Students are eligible for aid for up to 150% of the credits that their program requires. That added 50% is where remediation can fit in. |
| * which institutions can offer remediation | Yes. Remediation is offered only at CC's, with the exception of the one Historically Black four-year college. All other four-colleges must contract with CC's. | No state policy. Four-year colleges are not excluded from offering remediation but they do not receive state funding for it. | | | Yes. SCHEV has issued rule that the four-year colleges are no longer supposed to be providing remediation. |
| * content: size, type, and quality of remediation programming | Yes, some state regulation. The remediation courses offered must be on the list of remedial common courses. | No state policy. | Yes, some state regulation. By state law, the remedial courses CC's can offer are determined by the state Common Course Library, listing the allowable courses, common course descriptions, and competencies for each course. | Yes, some state regulation. The Coordinating Board has ruled that CC's can offer 3 levels of remediation, whereas four-year institutions can only offer two levels. | Yes, some state regulation. While the CC's determine what level of remediation they wish to provide, they do have to select the courses from the state common course document. |
| * exiting remediation (exit requirements) | Yes, state policy. There is a state required exit test, which is usually embedded in the course that is the highest level and determines success in a given area.. However, this is at the discretion of the institution. Each college can set its own cut-off score. | No state policy. | No state policy. Decisions as to whether students are ready to leave remediation are left to the colleges. Some CC's do not have any exit testing. | No state policy. CC's are responsible for deciding when a student is college ready. This will then be indicated on the college transcript. They may require that they pass a certain test or pass a course with a certain grade or complete a certain developmental sequence with a certain grade level. | No state policy. The states does not set exit requirements from remediation. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
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| * credit for remedial courses | No credit. | | | | Yes. Remedial education cannot be credited toward an associate's degree but occasionally can be credited toward a diploma or certificate. |
| * CC-HS collaboration to improve HS preparation | Yes. The state encourages high schools to administer the Common Placement Test at the beginning of 10th grade so students who require remediation can improve their skills before entering college. The state has established the CC Access Challenge, which funds joint programs with K-12 partners to improve students' skills before they reach CC's. The state is also trying to "align" high school and CC requirements. The state provides high schools with information about the performance of their graduates on placement tests and the numbers enrolled in remedial courses. | Yes. State mandated in 2003 that the Public Education Dept. work to align high school curricula and end of course tests with college placement tests. | Yes. The legislature has mandated that CC's report to local education agencies on the number of high school graduates who must enroll in remedial education. The Innovative Education Initiatives Act of 2003 (SB 656) directs the Education Cabinet to set as a priority cooperative efforts between secondary schools and institutions of higher education to decrease the need for remediation in higher education . | Yes. CC's are to provide high schools with data regarding the number of their graduates requiring remediation. Using state remedial education funds, CC's have begun to offer "student success courses" at high schools to discuss preparing for college. | Yes. State has Senior Year Initiative underway to align high school graduation and college entrance requirements by identifying core of 12 college-level courses taken in high school that will be accepted for credit by any public institution in Virginia. Intent is for students to get college freshman courses out of way before leaving high school and hence be less likely to need remediation. If a student passes a college level course, the college then accepts the course and student does not take the college placement test in that area. Also, the CC's have been working to improve the academic preparation of CC entrants by offering courses and administering placement tests to high school students. |
| b. academic counseling and guidance | | | | | |
| * funding | No specific funding. Funds come from general instruction. | No specific funding. Funds come out of general formula-based student service appropriation. | Very little. No specific funding beyond providing for hiring one counselor position. | No specific funding. Funds come from general funding for instruction. | No specific funding. Rather, funding comes with the state's appropriation for student services. |

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| * content standards e.g. what kinds can be offered, who can counsel | No state standards. | No state standards. | No state standards. | No state standards. | No state standards. |
| c. nonacademic support: | | | | | |
| * funding | No specific funding. Funds come from general funding for student services. | No specific funding (except for small program of child care for adult students). Funds come from general funding for student services. | Very little. No specific funding except for small programs of minority male mentoring and child care for adult students. Otherwise, funds come from general funding for student services. | No specific funding. There are no state funds or guidelines specifically for nonacademic counseling. | No specific funding. |
| * state standards e.g. what kinds can be offered, who can counsel, what is the counselor/counselee ratio, what should be the frequency of contact with students | No state standards. | Yes, some state standards. CC staffers who provide non-academic counseling must be licensed under the New Mexico Counseling and Therapy Practice Act of 1997 and the Act provides some guidelines for practice. | No state standards. | No state standards. | No state standards. |
| d. transfer assistance: | | | | | |
| * student aid earmarked for transfer students | No aid program specifically for transfer students. | No aid program specifically for transfer students. | No aid program specifically for transfer students. | No aid program specifically for transfer students. | No aid program specifically for transfer students. |
| * transfer advising: state provided programs | Yes. The state supports an online student advising system – Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students (FACTS) – that provides transfer information and advice. | No. There does not appear to be any state-sponsored transfer advisory webpage, etc. | Yes. State CC System supports a webpage providing (1) names of transfer coordinators at each college; (2) text of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement between the state CC System and the UNC. The UNC supports a webpage that provides Transfer Performance Reports for each CC and a computerized transfer application. | Yes. The state maintains an online advising system -- the Texas General Education Core Web Center -- for students wanting to find out which general education courses at their home institution fall under the general education core of the other institution. | Yes. State Policy on Transfer states that each senior public institution should provide transfer information in a convenient manner to students. A 2004 act directs SCHEV to inform the public about all general education courses offered at public two-year institutions and which ones are accepted for transfer credit at four-year public and private institutions. |

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| * transfer advising: funding for CC advising | No state funding specifically for transfer students. Funding for transfer advising comes out of the state funding for student support services generally. | No state funding specifically for transfer students. Funds from general funding for student services. | No state funding specifically for transfer advising. It comes out of the regular state funding for student services. | No state funding specifically for transfer advising. Transfer advising is financed out of the regular formula-based funding for instruction. | No state funding specifically for transfer students. |
| * transfer advising: standards | No state standards for transfer advising in terms of the types of advising offered, who can advise students, advisor/advisee ratios, etc. | No state standards for transfer advising. | No state standards except for a requirement that CC's identify one of their academic advisors as the person who will provide transfer advice. | No state standards. | No state standards. |
| * transfer of academic associate's degrees | Yes, state policy. Florida law states that every AA graduate of a CC are guaranteed admission to one of the public universities, junior status, and completion of the lower-division general education requirements at the receiving college, except in the case of a limited access or teacher certification program or a major program requiring an audition. | No state policy. | Yes, state policy. Under the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA), students graduating with a CC A.A. degree are "assured" admission to one of the 16 UNC institutions if they have met all the requirements of the CAA and have an overall GPA of at least 2.0 and a C or better in all CAA courses. Moreover, they are guaranteed status as juniors and as having satisfied the lower-division general education requirements of the receiving institution. | No state policy. State does not have a policy of guaranteeing university admission and junior status for associate's degree graduates except for those with an associate of arts in Teacher Education. | Yes, some state policy. The State Policy on Transfer states that public four-year colleges and universities "should" give junior standing and designate as having met their lower division general education requirements to CC students who completed the associate degree of arts, sciences, or arts and sciences. However, students who receive an associate's degree are not – as in Florida and North Carolina – guaranteed acceptance at a four-year college and junior status. |

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| * occupational education transfer | <p>Yes. State policy. The state articulation agreement must guarantee statewide articulation of appropriate courses within AS degree programs, whether on an individual or block basis. The administrative rules of the State Bd of Ed state that (1) all graduates of CC AS programs listed in the Statewide Articulation Manual shall be granted admission to any of the public universities in the program designated to articulate with their degree; (2) all AS graduates of programs that articulate with an interdisciplinary capstone degree program in a public or private university shall be guaranteed admission to that program. For both there is exception for limited access programs and those requiring specific grades on particular courses for admission. The state is working on defining transferability for specific programs, particularly education and nursing. Florida also has rules governing transfer between postsecondary occupational programs run by the school districts and those run by CC's. At this point, the state has 7 occupational programs that are guaranteed state-wide transferability.</p> | <p>Yes. State has developed a transfer module for early childhood education and is working on elementary education and nursing education.</p> | <p>Yes, some state policy. Students enrolled in an associate of applied science (AAS) program are guaranteed credit for general education courses that they received a C or higher in. Otherwise, the transfer of AAS courses is not regulated by statewide rules but by bilateral articulation agreements between individual CC's and four-year colleges</p> | <p>Yes. The state has mandated 60-credit Field of Study Curricula are largely in occupational fields (see below).</p> | <p>Yes, some state policy. The CC System has developed an articulation agreement with Old Dominion University so that CC students can transfer into high-cost, high demand programs such as nursing and engineering, and it has been working on similar agreements with the other state universities.</p> |

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| * general education transfer | Yes, state policy. Students with an AA are guaranteed by statute that they will have met all the general education requirements at the public university. For students who do not have an AA, the state guarantees that the receiving university will accept the 36-credit general education core defined by their CC as having fulfilled the general education core at the university. And if a student has completed only a portion of the CC general education core (as would usually be the case for AS students), the courses taken will apply toward the university general education core. | Yes, state policy. The 1995 Postsecondary Education Articulation Act required development of 64-credit transfer modules including 35 credits of general education. Under new legislation in 2005, the transfer modules and general education core are to be transferred as a “block” in order to prevent universities from accepting only some courses. | Yes, state policy. North Carolina has a 44 semester-credit hour general education core that is fully transferable across the CC System and between that system and all University of North Carolina (UNC) institutions and 22 private colleges. Students who complete the general education core at a North Carolina CC will not be required to take other lower-division general education classes at a UNC institution even if the students’ 44-semester credit hour core does not completely match the receiving institution’s core. However, this guarantee only holds if a student has an overall GPA of 2.0 and a grade of C or better in all core courses. | Yes, state policy. State has required colleges to define a 42 credit general education core that is guaranteed transfer. THECB has identified specific areas and how many credits should be in each, but it has allowed colleges to identify different courses as meeting the general education core. A student who meets the general education core at one school is guaranteed it will fully meet the general education requirements at another college even if the courses are not identical. The one exception is if the receiving college has been allowed to define a core of more than 42 credits. If a student has not completed the full 42 credits, those credits completed are transferred and need not be repeated | Yes, some state policy. General education in an A.A. or A.S. from a public two-year college is to be regarded as equivalent to four-year college lower division general education requirements. The State Council is to “make available to the public information identifying all general education courses offered at public two-year institutions and designating those that are accepted for purposes of transfer for course credit at four-year public and private institutions of higher education in Virginia.” However, senior colleges are not required to accept this package of courses. |

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| * specific major modules | Yes, state policy. By state law, the Dept. of Educ. must identify common prerequisite courses and course substitutions for degree programs across all institutions. But although certain prerequisites are supposed to hold statewide, this does not mean that all state universities adhere to them. For a given major, a number of universities hold to certain prerequisites in common, while others define unique ones. | Yes, state policy. Within the 64 credit transfer modules, community college/four-year college course equivalencies have been established in early childhood education and a transfer compact is being proposed for elementary teacher education. Attempts are also being made in nursing education but have yet to be accomplished. | Yes, state policy. Joint academic disciplinary committees of the state CC System and the UNC have developed system-wide guidelines for curricula that will prepare students for certain majors at the baccalaureate level. | Yes, state policy. State has designated 60-credit transferable Field of Study Curricula in certain fields (mostly vocational). Completion of one of these “field of study curricula” at a CC allows a student to completely fulfill the lower division requirements for the degree program into which the student is transferring at a public four-year college. There are complaints that there are many fields of study which do not have a full 60 hours that are transferable. | Yes, some state policy. The CC System has developed an articulation agreement with Old Dominion University so that CC students can transfer into high-cost, high demand programs such as nursing and engineering, and it is working on similar agreements with the other state universities. |
| * common course numbering | Yes, state policy. The state has legislatively mandated a common course numbering system for public institutions and for private institutions that choose to join. All institutions using the numbering system guarantee transfer for a course if a participating institution offers a course with that same number. | Yes, state policy. Legislation passed in 2005 requires that a common course numbering and naming system be established for all lower division courses that are substantially equivalent. Faculty groups have been meeting by discipline to develop common course numbering and naming and to establish competencies for general education | Yes, state policy. The Common Course Library (CCL) includes courses for associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs in the CC System. CC's select courses from the CCL to design all curriculum programs, including their general requirements. The CCL was developed in partnership between the CC System and the UNC System. The CCL is updated yearly by the Transfer Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives from the CC System, UNC, and independent colleges. | Yes, state policy. The state has a common course numbering system and a Lower Division Academic Course Manual that lists courses that are transferable among the public HEI's. CCN became statutory in 2003 but had been used voluntarily by CC's since 1973. | No state policy. |

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| c. Baccalaureate provision: | | | | | |
| * whether state funds or otherwise encourages 4-year colleges to offer upper-division courses at community colleges | Yes, some state encouragement. University centers do not receive specific state funding. However, state encourages university centers and provides indirect support insofar as the threat of a CC being able to get state permission to establish a baccalaureate program prompts a university to be receptive to a CC's request for university courses on its campus. | Yes, some state policy. Universities have moved to provide upper-division instruction at CC's. The number of programs on CC's has doubled over a three year period. This stemmed from a Dept. of Higher Education regulatory change five years ago that put distance education funding on the same level as on-campus and service area instruction. Moreover, service area restrictions were removed. | Yes, some state encouragement. State encourages CC's to work with 4-year colleges to offer upper-division courses at the CC's, but there is no funding specifically for this. There are now several university centers at CC's. The state CC system has also developed five complete online degrees, allowing students to get an entire baccalaureate without leaving CC. | No state policy. CC's have been establishing university centers where universities offer upper-division courses at CC's themselves. However, no state mandates or incentives to stimulate four-year colleges to do this. | Yes, some state encouragement. The state has supported the Teletechnet program where Old Dominion offers upper division courses at the CC's. However, there is no state policy to mandate or finance other state universities to offer instruction at community colleges. |
| * whether state allow community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees on their own | Yes, state policy. The State Board of Education was authorized to approve the offering of limited baccalaureate degrees at selected community colleges. As of April 2005, 6 community colleges are authorized. | Yes, some state policy. Northern New Mexico Community College was given the right to offer a B.A. because of its constitutional status to provide teacher education and some demonstrated needs analyses. All other CC's are not affected by this change. It is unlikely that they would get permission to offer the B.A. | No state policy. | Yes, state policy. In June 2003, Legislature required the Texas Higher Educ. Coordinating Board to examine the feasibility of authorizing public junior colleges to offer baccalaureates in applied science and applied technology. The bill also required the Coordinating Board to pilot this at three CC's, as determined by the Board. | No state policy. |

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| f. noncredit to credit articulation: | | | | | |
| * moving students from noncredit to credit programs | Yes, some state policy. The state provides no state funding but it has supported the development of an articulation agreement regarding transfer of credits between area vocational centers (which cannot offer college credits) and community colleges (see above). | No state funding or standards. | Yes, some encouragement but no state funding or standards. The state does encourage CC's to facilitate student movement from the noncredit to the credit curriculum. | Perhaps some encouragement. Contradictory information regarding whether the state of Texas encourages movement from noncredit to credit programs. Our conclusion is that the state does not encourage, but also does not oppose, such movement. However, no state funding or mandate. | No state policy. |
| g. economic development: does your state fund or otherwise encourage community colleges to get involved in economic development? | Yes. State mandate and funding. Florida state education code states that the CC mission includes "promoting economic development for the state" through contract training, technology transfer centers, economic development centers, and workforce literacy programs. The state performance accountability system includes measures pertaining to workforce and economic development. | Yes, state funding. Legislation in 2005 created a new office of Workforce Training and Development and articulated a strong role for CC's in workforce preparation and economic development. The state Workforce Training Act of 2003 authorizes the delivery of customized, non-credit training through CC's. | Yes, state mandate and funding. Workforce preparation has long been a main stated mission of the CC system. Moreover, state law requires the community colleges to offer contract training and provides funding. | Yes, state mandate and funding. State law provides that one of the purposes of the CC is to provide technical and vocational programs. State law also encourages the provision of contract training. The Texas Workforce Commission funds CC contract training through its Skills Development Fund. | Yes. State mandate and funding. The CC's are designated as the lead state agency for providing workforce training in Virginia. Moreover, the Virginia CC System supports a Statewide Training Network providing contract training at all 23 CC's. |

TABLE 3
STATE POLICIES FOR PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY
Dougherty, Reid, and Nienhusser

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
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| 1. Performance Indicators | | | | | |
| * access by minority students | Enrollment composition by race (Factbook) | Total enrollments by race (HED, NMAACC) | Total and program enrollments by race. The racial breakdown of the program enrollments is only for the system as a whole and not by individual college (CSF, FB). | (1) Total credit enrollments, (2) credential seeking, and (3) continuing education, all broken down by race (CBM001, CBM00A, LBB) | Total, occupational-program, remedial, and dual-credit enrollments, all broken down by race (VCCS, SCHEV). |
| * access by low-income students | Enrollment composition by income (Factbook). | | No publicly reported breakdown. | Total credit enrollments by income (Pell receipt) (CBM001 and LBB). | Total, occupational-program, and remedial enrollments by income (VCCS, SCHEV) |
| * persistence to 2nd semester | | Yes. First-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. There is a plan to break this broken down by race and income (defined as Pell grant receipt versus not). | | | Persistence from fall to spring, not publicly broken down by race or income (VCCS, SCHEV) |
| * persistence to 2nd year | Yes. First-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. These data are reported to the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its State Data Exchange. These data are not broken down by race or income. | Yes. First-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. There is a plan to break this data down by race and income (defined as Pell grant receipt versus not). | Yes. First-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. These data are reported to the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its State Data Exchange. These data are not broken down by race or income. | Yes. First-time, full-time, degree-seeking students (CBM001, 002). The data are reported to the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its State Data Exchange. The data are broken down by race but not income. | Yes. First-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. The data are reported to the Southern Regional Education Board as part of its State Data Exchange. The data are not broken down by race or income. |

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| * successful remediation | Completion rate of highest level remedial course within two years for first-time students tested into and enrolled in remedial course. These data -- which are only reported to the community colleges - are broken down by race but not income (PR). | | 3 measures: (1) % of developmental students completing course with C or better; (2) % of basic skills students moving to a higher level; (3) % of developmental education completers with a C or better in subsequent college level course. None of these is publicly broken down by race or income (CSF). | Percentage of development education students who pass TASP test within two years (LBB outcome 4). These data are not publicly broken down by race or income. | |
| * skill attainment | CLAST (rising juniors) results: passage rate for students with 60 or more hours (PR). These results are not reported broken down by student race or income. | | | Number of marketable skills award completers. broken down by race (CBM00M). | :Percentage of technical majors in certificate, diploma, and degree programs successfully completing (1) an academic skills course; (2) a technical skills course. Not broken down by race or income (VCCS). |
| * course completion | | Percentage completed of courses attempted, in general and by type: academic, vocational, remedial. There are plans to break this measure down by race/ethnicity and income (student's eligibility for a Pell grant). | | Percentage of contact hours completed (LBB outcome 1). These data are not publicly broken down by race or income. | |

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| * graduation (degree & certificate) | (1) Completers of AA's (PB2; by race and income); (2) Completers of AA's and certificates (FB; by race); (3) Completers and those still enrolled in good standing (PR) | (1) Number of graduates broken down by race for CC's as a whole. Figures are not publicly broken down by CC; (2) for vocational concentrators, % completing degree or credential within 3 years (Perkins measure); (3) Total rate of success: % – among cohort of new students intending to transfer or obtain a degree – who meet any of five conditions within three years after college entrance: received degree or certificate; transferred; became transfer ready (completing with "C" or better, 18 credits or more of general education core); or still enrolled. Figures are publicly reported broken down by CC and student race (NMACC). | (1) Numbers of graduates: Total number of graduates (FB); number of GEDs and Adult High School Diplomas (AHSDs) awarded (CSF); (2) Rates of graduation or still enrolled (CSF). No publicly reported breakdown by race or income. | (1) Number of graduates: Total graduates, broken down by race (CBM009; LBB Output 1); number of Associate of Arts in Teaching, broken down by race (CBM009); number of computer science and engineering technology, nursing and allied health graduates (not broken down by race) (CBM009); number of marketable skill award completers, broken down by race (CBM00M); (2) Rates of graduation: Rate after 3, 4, 6 years for first-time, full-time credential seeking, broken down by race (CBM001, 002, 009); rate after six years of graduation or still enrolled for first-time, full-time credential seeking students, broken down by race (CBM001, 002, 009) | (1) Number of graduates: total numbers of graduates; number of degree, certificates, and occupational technical degrees awarded; (2) Rate of graduation: total rate; rate of graduation for first-time, full-time students after three years; (3) minority gender graduates as a percentage of the total graduates for all programs with gender under-representation. No publicly reported breakdown by race or income (VCCS, SCHEV) |
| * graduation efficiency (time to degree) | Completers graduating with an AA in less than 72 attempted credit hours (PB2). These data are not reported broken down by student race or income. | Percent of full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students who complete a degree/certificate in 150% of time. These figures are reported for the two-year colleges as a whole and not broken down by individual CC or by student characteristics (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004). | | CM | (1) Credits earned as % of credits required in AA, AS, AAS programs (Instiit'l effectiveness measure; instiit'l 1). No publicly reported break down by race or income (VCCS). (2) % of first-time, full-time, occupational freshmen completing program within 150% of program length. No publicly reported break down by race or income (VCCS Perkins core indicator 2P2). |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|
| * transfer | (1) Numbers: number of transfers to state universities system by race and income (PB2; FETPIP; AR) | Gross number of students transferring from two-year institutions to research and regional universities in New Mexico. These figures were not reported broken down by community college or student characteristics such as race and income (CHE). | | (1) Number: Total number, broken down by race (LBB outcome 3); (2) Rates of transfer: % of associate degree graduates enrolled in Texas senior institution within one year of graduation (PR Automated Student and Adult Learner Followup and CB116); (3) % who transfer to senior institution with at least 30 semester credit hours (CBM001). | (1) Numbers: Total numbers; (2) Rates of transfer: rate for graduates; rate for CC entrants who earn 12 or more credits within four years and transfer within four years (Cohen formula). For all measures no publicly reported breakdown by race or income (VCCS). |
| * success after transfer | For transfers who earned AA before transferring, percentage who achieved a GPA of at least 2.5 at university (PR). The data are not reported broken down by student race or income. | Instate transfer and completion of a bachelor's degree within 10 years from 1988 – 1991 (CHE). | Of students who completed 24 or more credits or obtained an associate degree at CC, percentage who had a GPA of 2.0 or higher after two semesters at UNC institution (CSF). No publicly reported breakdown by race or income. | | (1) Average GPA for CC entrants who earned 12 credits at CC and transferred within 4 years; (2) % completing BA or higher degree within 8 years for CC entrants who earned 12 credits and transferred within 4 years; (3) % who are in good standing one year after graduation. For all these measures no publicly reported breakdown by race or income (VCCS). |
| * passage of licensure exams | Percentage of AS graduates who pass the licensure exam for their respective vocational program (PR). The data are not reported broken down by student race or income. | Percentage of students in a discipline requiring external certification or licensure who pass a licensure or certification exam. It is disaggregated by CC but not by student race or income (NMACC). | Percentage of students in a discipline requiring external certification or licensure who pass a licensure or certification exam (CSF). No publicly reported breakdown by race or income. | (1) % of students in a discipline requiring external certification or licensure who pass a licensure or certification exam (LBB outcome 5); (2) % passing licensure (certification exam) for teacher education students, broken down by race (LBB). | |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| * job placement | Percentage of AA, AS, and certificate graduates found to be (1) employed (FETPIP); (2) employed in jobs related to their area of instruction (FETPIP, PR); (3) continuing their training (FETPIP). The data are not reported broken down by student race or income. | Among graduates and those completing at least 45 credits of their program, % placed in a job or continuing education within one year of leaving the CC. The figures are reported for both all graduates and for workforce education graduates specifically. The figures are broken down by student race (NMAACC). | Percentage of workforce program grads employed within one year of last attendance (CSF). No publicly reported breakdown by race or income. | (1) Percentage of graduates employed in Texas within one year of graduation, broken down by race; (2) Percentage of graduates either employed or enrolled in senior institution within one year of graduation, broken down by race (Automated Student and Adult Learner Followup and CB116). | (1) Proportion of graduates employed in Virginia one year after graduation; (2) for technical graduates, proportion employed or studying at a four-year college 6-12 months after CC graduation. For all measures no publicly reported breakdown by race or income (VCCS). |
| * job retention | | Perkins measure. % – among vocational graduates placed in jobs – who were retained in the job six months after placement. This figure is for the two-year colleges as a whole and is not reported broken down by student background (NMAACC). | | | Of those technical graduates found working, proportion who continue working for a period of at least one quarter. No publicly reported breakdown by race or income (VCCS). |
| * wage placement | Program completers who are placed in jobs paying more than \$10 an hour (PB2) | | | | |
| * student realization of goals, satisfaction with CC | | | (1) % of completers (of certificate, diploma, or degree programs) who report meeting their goal for attending a CC (CSF); (2) % of graduates and early leavers who are satisfied with college's programs and services (CSF). No publicly reported breakdown by race or income. | | |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| * community college's contribution to job creation and economic development | | Several different measures are collected: number of firms served through contract or tuition agreements; numbers enrolled in workforce development/continuing education courses; jobs created or retained; and community partnerships entered. Measures are reported for individual CC's (NMACC). | (1) Numbers enrolled in workforce development/continuing education; (2) Number of firms served through contract training or tuition agreements; (3) Employer satisfaction with quality of program completers; (4) Employer satisfaction with contract training and small business development (CSF). First figure is broken down by race (for CC system as a whole and not individual colleges) but not income. | Number of firms served through contract or tuition agreements; numbers enrolled in workforce development/continuing education courses (E 13) | |
| 2. Data Collection Procedures | | | | | |
| * data warehouse encompassing CC's, K-12 sector, and universities. | Yes. Florida has a data warehouse containing data on students K-20. At this time, the various data sources are not fully compatible. | No. New Mexico does not yet have an information system that integrates data from the community colleges with data from the K-12 system and the four-year colleges. However, steps are being taken toward establishing such a data warehouse. | No. The state has a statewide data warehouse on a unit-record level basis. However, it does not encompass data for the K-12 and state university systems as well. Data are occasionally broken down by student race and age, but not broken down by student income. The CC System began moving to a statewide computer system in summer 2005, with the process to be completed by fall 2007. | Yes. Texas PK-16 Public Info Resource (TPEIR) aggregates data from the Texas Ed. Agency, Texas Higher Educ. Coordinating Bd., and the State Bd. for Educator Certification. State requires colleges to submit annual report that includes standards that measure student success in meeting academic requirements of the institution. State maintains automated followup system that tracks CC entrants after college. | No. State maintains data warehouse in the form of website from which reports on enrollments, admissions, financial aid, etc. can be downloaded. Website can generate reports for the CC system or for specific CC's but does not include data for state universities and K-12 system. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia is holding conversations about how to expand its data capacity. |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| 3. Connection to State Funding (performance funding or budgeting) | <p>Yes. The Florida performance funding system has had two components: The first, and still existent, is Performance Based Budgeting (PB2) (1996-). The second component was Workforce Development Education Fund (WDEF) (1997/98-1999/00). It typically has amounted to about 1% of total state appropriations for CC's and about 0.5% of total CC revenues from all sources. The PB2 measures are not publicly reported but rather are reported to the Legislature. However, many of the measures overlap those publicly reported as part of the state's performance reporting system.</p> | <p>No. A Performance Incentive Fund was established in 2003 and the Commission on Higher Education was directed to develop performance measures and standards. However, the Legislature has yet to vote funds for the incentive formula. An effort was made in 2005 to allocate \$7 million but it failed.</p> | <p>Yes. State has a performance funding system, in which CC's can receive more funds depending on performance on 6 state indicators. Five are required and the sixth is chosen by the college. For each measure on which a CC performs "satisfactorily" (at or above the state standards), it can carry forward into the next fiscal year one-third of one percent (1/3 of 1%) of its final fiscal year General Fund appropriations. And if the CC performs satisfactorily on at least five measures ("superior" performance), it gets to share equally with other superior CC's in the general funds remaining unallocated by the N.C. CC System at the end of the fiscal year.</p> | <p>No. In 2004-05, the governor proposed that any new money to HE, above that for enrollment growth, be allocated on basis of accountability system. However, proposal not enacted, though perhaps in the future. Texas has a PB system involving the Legislative Budget Board. LBB reviews all funding requests before go to House and Senate. THECB submits unified budget request for all the CC's, supported by data responding to LBB performance measures. LBB has focused on the performance of the system as a whole rather than of individual colleges. There is little evidence that the performance of community colleges affects their legislative appropriation.</p> | <p>Yes. 2005 act mandated incentive based performance funding system. If CC system qualifies, it will be given access to extra funds. To qualify, CC system must be certified by SCHEV as meeting certain institutional performance benchmarks. The benchmarks are now before General Assembly for approval. Once approved, SCHEV will annually measure performance of CC system and determine if it has met the benchmarks. To be certified, CC's must demonstrate performance at or above the "absolute minimum standard of performance" on all measures; continuing progress toward 14 of 17 targets for two-year colleges; and failing no more than two measures for any single goal. If the system is not certified in any given year, it will not receive the financial benefits. There is no further "punishment" for not meeting the goals outlined in the act. First round of certifications is planned for spring 2007.</p> |

| | Florida | New Mexico | North Carolina | Texas | Virginia |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| 4. Impact on Practice *use by state in decisionmaking on success policies | Yes and no. It is clear that state CC officials look carefully at the data. However, not at all clear if legislators do the same when they go to craft state policy | No evidence that the state government has used outcome data collected by the community colleges to inform and modify state policies affecting access to and success in the community college, particularly for minority and low-income students. | Little impact. According to key state CC official, focus has been on changing behavior of the CC's rather than state policies. However, State CC Board and UNC Board recently approved a Diploma Readiness Program, which defines a student who completes the 44-credit core as a graduate. This would help the colleges perform better on one of the Critical Success Factors. | Unclear. The extent to which performance data are actually used by state officials to craft state access and success policy is not entirely clear. Several interviewees did feel that performance data led state to launch its "Closing the Gaps" initiative. However, others hold that the state is not using the data. | No. According to both state and local community college officials, the data being collected are not yet being used by the state to inform policy development. |
| * do the community colleges use data in decision-making on success policies | Yes, some impact. Though Florida CC's indicate that they have responded to state accountability demands, the evidence is rather weak that these demands have resulted in significant impacts on performance, as measured by the performance of the Florida CC community college system in comparison to states with weaker performance accountability systems. | Yes, some impact. The CC's are beginning to make moderate use of the outcomes data. There are reports that a measure of programs that are stable or improving in enrollments has led colleges to enhance their program review process. There is no state financing of improvement of community college data collection capacity and this lack has made it difficult for colleges. | Yes, some impact. CC's have responded by e.g. improving program quality so that they produce better licensure passage results; improving post-transfer performance of CC transfers by developing learning communities, improving student advisement, and better monitoring student performance. However, state's CC's are very dependent on state system for data analysis. State is trying to change this by training CC staffers in basic statistical analysis so that the CC's can do their own analyses. | Mixed reports. Some CC presidents question how much their colleges are really attending to state data. But state officials say that outcomes data have affected the CC's. A state official said that the state got constant feedback from local CC officials – particularly institutional researchers – that they used outcomes data in planning and program development. Our conclusion is that the state data have affected the CC's but in ways that presidents may not be entirely aware of or willing to acknowledge. | Mixed reports. A local CC president stated that the state performance data were having an effect on CC behavior. But other local officials saw little impact, in great part because the state often presents the data in aggregate form, lumping all the CC's together. However, the state's new performance funding system was just enacted in spring 2005 and is still in development, so its impact cannot yet be ascertained. |

CHAPTER TWO

FLORIDA¹

Florida is a natural subject of any study of state policymaking toward community college access and success for minority and low-income students. Indeed, the state's two-year college system is very large, enrolling 816 thousand students in 2003-04 at 28 colleges (Florida Department of Education, 2005c: 4, 23). The state also has a large minority population. Finally, Florida is well known for the breadth and quality of its data collection on community college performance.

Below we first set the stage by describing the state context: the size and composition of the state's population; the nature of its economy; and the structure, governance, and finance of the community college system. We then describe the state's policies affecting access to and success in the community college for minority and low-income students. As part of this description we address the state's provisions for performance accountability since they have clear relevance both to state policy and to the aim of the Achieving the Dream initiative to use the analysis of data as the main lever to improve both community college efforts and state policies to improve student access and success. As we go along, we note any evaluations our interviewees made of those policies and any policy proposals they themselves offered.

This report is the product of intensive interviews that we conducted in Florida and analysis of documents produced both by state agencies and external organizations, such as the Education Commission of the States and the Southern Regional Education Board. We interviewed officials of the Florida Department of Education, state legislators and staff, gubernatorial advisors, officials of four community colleges, and heads of local community organizations representing African Americans and Latinos in Florida. The four community colleges represented different types – urban, suburban, and small town – located in north, central, and south Florida.

THE STATE CONTEXT

Population Size And Composition

Approximately 17 million people reside in Florida (as of 2003), making the state the fourth most populous in the nation. In that year, 80% of the population identified itself racially as white; 16% as Black/African-American; 2% as Asian or Pacific Islander; less than 1% as American Indian; and 1% as of two or more races. Meanwhile, 19% identified ethnically as Hispanic or Latino; these individuals can be of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005: 24).

Between 2001-02 and 2017-18, the composition of public high school graduates will greatly change. While the income distribution of the population will not change much, the racial-ethnic

composition will. The minority share of high-school graduates is projected to rise from 40 percent in 2001-02 to 55 percent in 2013-14, with Hispanics accounting for the bulk of this increase (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003).

Economic Structure

The state's gross state product in 2004 was \$594.5 billion, fourth largest in the nation. However, this ranking belies the fact that many Floridians are not well off. The state per capita personal income in 2004 was only 23rd in the nation, at \$31,455 in 2004. And the state's poverty rate averaged 12.6% over the years 2002-2003, which put it just above the national average of 12.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2005a, b).

Nature of the Community College System

There are 28 community colleges in Florida, enrolling 816,000 students in 2003-04 (annual unduplicated headcount) at 173 sites (Florida Department of Education, 2005c: 4, 23). They accounted for 51% of total credit enrollments in Florida institutions of higher education in 2001 (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 13).

In the fall of 2003, 35% of the students were enrolled full time and the average student age was 27. Over a third (39%) of the students identified as racial/ethnic minorities (Florida Department of Education, 2004a: 16). Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Florida's community colleges have student bodies that are at least 33% minority or at least 33% eligible for Pell Grants.² Analyses done by the Division of Community College and Workforce Education find that 80% of the state's college students who are of minority background or Pell recipients are to be found in the community college system (Armstrong, 2005a).

Governance and Finance System

The Florida Division of Community College and Workforce Education (DCCWE), a division within the Florida Department of Education, coordinates the state community college system. There are local boards whose members are appointed by the Governor.

In 2003-04, state funds constituted 64% of the community colleges' education and general budget of \$1.3 billion (Florida Department of Education, 2004b: 79-80).

The legislature approved a budget in 2004 which included a \$64 million increase for the community colleges. This was a 7.2 % increase directed towards increasing enrollments, adding faculty, and expanding workforce education programs (Armstrong, 2004a). According to the State Chancellor for Community Colleges, "The system was very successful with a multi-year lobbying strategy which focused on 'unfunded enrollments' and the fact that for the first time,

budget constraints were forcing colleges to turn students away.” Despite the sizable increase, it was still \$20 million less than the originally recommended budget (Armstrong, 2004e).

As will be noted below, a small portion of the state funding of community colleges is allocated on the basis of performance.

Enrollment Demands

Between 2001-02 and 2017-18, the number of public high school graduates in Florida is expected to increase by 30 percent (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003). The Education Commission of the States has estimated that Florida has to increase its postsecondary enrollments by 79% (nearly 700 thousand more students) between 2000 and 2015 if it is to match the performance of the best-performing (“benchmark”) states (Education Commission of the States, 2003).

ACCESS POLICIES

Public Commitment to Student Access

The Commissioner of Education and the Chancellor of Community Colleges have made public statements stating a commitment to greater access for both minority and low-income students. For example, the Chancellor of Community Colleges has stated: “[P]romise number one of the nation’s community colleges is to provide and promote access to college for all segments of society. One group usually underrepresented in postsecondary education in both numbers and positive outcomes is low-income students” (Armstrong, 2004b). In addition, the Chancellor serves as a member of a College Board Task Force on Low-Income Students and he sent an email to local community college officials underscoring the needs of low-income students (Armstrong, 2005b). Finally, the state requires colleges to submit an equity plan and report that, as one state official described, is “rooted in the civil rights legislation from the 60s and the requirement that Florida continue to proactively address equity in its higher education system.” This commitment to equity has been institutionalized in the form of an Office of Equity and Access in the Department of Education.

At the same time, some interviewees expressed doubt about the actual level of commitment and the corresponding results. For example, one interviewee commented that “if you mean access in the sense of ‘everyone,’ I think Florida has failed, frankly, to address that...we just don’t have the need-based financial aid at the level that is required. The working poor...are left out. And obviously there is disproportionate representation there in minorities.” In addition, members of the African American community may not perceive the community colleges as that welcoming. As one prominent Black observer put it:

To date, the state of Florida has, if I'm not mistaken, two African American presidents in the 28 community college system. And that has caused a great deal of [trouble] because when the two-year colleges that were black and the two-year colleges that were white merged together not one African American president ascended to the seat of the presidency....So that, for years, left in the black community a taste of rejection, and a feeling that they were not welcome. Unfortunately, here we are in 2004 and there is still some of that feeling. So you don't get as many African American students in the community college system as we should.

Thus, for this observer, the question is whether the public commitment to access, including the rhetoric, is being matched by state policy: "for me it's not a commitment until its happening. It's not a commitment until the dollars are being placed in the system to ensure there are the resources to do what you're talking about. To answer you, no. Florida has not made the commitment. It should make it. The great 28, oh that sounds beautiful. We have some tremendous results in certain areas, but there is overwhelming failure from my perspective in terms of Florida's commitment to community college education at the level that it ought to be – lip service, yes."

In what follows, we review specific state policies that stimulate community colleges to encourage access by minority and low-income students. Some are specifically addressed to such students. But many – while not specifically directed to such students – do help them. The policies considered are the following: open door admissions, tuition, student aid, outreach to potential students, comprehensive curricula, and convenient access.

Open Door Admissions

Current Policy

In order to enter an associate program in the community college, students must have graduated from high school (with a standard or high school equivalency diploma) and have passed the College Placement Test in English, reading, and math (Fla. statutes chap. 1007). However, if students have not graduated from high school, they can still go to the community college, entering a GED prep program or some certificate programs. If they graduate from the GED program and then pass the College Placement Test (or equivalent), they can then enter an associate program in the community college.

Undocumented immigrants are not guaranteed access to community colleges by state law, but they are also not barred. Their admission is left to local decision by community colleges (Biswas, 2005).

Evaluations by Respondents

As with other states that are growing rapidly, Florida is still committed to its open door policy, but is struggling with a question of capacity. A community college president estimated that of the 300,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students they have in their system, “we think the number being turned away was about 14,000 FTE.” However, the bigger problem seems to be not getting access to the right courses, rather than being unable to enter the community college at all. As a state official put it, “I think they let them all register, whether they can offer all the courses the students want to take or not in a term may be a problem, but I don’t know that they’ve turned them away as much as they haven’t been able to offer the courses the students need to take...that is the biggest access problem.” An African American leader concurred: “We have a lot of kids who are gaining access to the institution but they’re not getting access to the programs of their choice...for me access is not just getting a seat in the institution; it’s getting a seat in a program that you want to succeed in.”

However, even access to the community college per se may become problematic in the future. One community college president argued: “there is a huge looming problem and the problem is the demand for higher education here is going to outstrip capacity pretty dramatically over the next decade.” This interviewee went on to express concern about the possibility of “rationing” of higher education, most likely on the basis of “merit.”

Policy Proposals from Respondents

With respect to averting a danger to the open door posed by huge future enrollment demand, the suggestion was made that the state begin to structure ways of accommodating this increase: “the state has no public policy to plan for the increase in the population that we know the demographics. You can do the projections and see the bubbles of coming students as they move through the K-12 system. There is no public policy to plan for that, there is no strategic policy to plan for that.” More specifically, several interviewees agreed that more resources are needed to ensure that enough course sections are available to meet student demand (Couturier, 2005: 1). In fact, the state established an Access Task Force – chaired by the heads of the Department of Education and the university Board of Governors – to look at the issue of capacity by assessing current and expected capacity of the public and private delivery system and institutions (Florida Department of Education, 2005h).

Tuition

High tuition can be a potent obstacle to community college access for minority and low-income students. Research studies find that tuition increases at community colleges lead to significant drops in enrollment not only at community colleges but higher education generally and to widening inequality of access to higher education (Heller, 1999: 76, 79; McPherson & Schapiro, 1998: 36-44; Terenzini, Cabrera, & Bernal, 2001: 11).

Current Policy

The average resident tuition and required fees for public two-year institutions was \$1,915 in 2005-06, which put the state as the 15th lowest in the nation (Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 9).³ The estimated total net cost of attending a community college (tuition, room, and board, minus student aid) in 2004 was on average 38% of the median family income of the bottom 40% of the population in family income; this was the highest figure for the five first-round Achieving the Dream states (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003: 371; National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 9, 13; idem, 2004b).

Each local community college board of trustees establishes tuition and fees, but they cannot be more than 15% above or 10% below the combined total of the fee schedule adopted by the state Legislature and the technology fee adopted by the local board of trustees. However, the local board can waive fees for students (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

Keeping Down Tuition

There is a state policy to keep tuition and fees down. Tuition changes are set on an annual basis. Changes are not made predictable, but as noted, there is also an upper and lower limit based on the average community college fee within which community colleges can set their own tuitions.

Tuition Charged Undocumented Immigrants

Undocumented students are not allowed to pay instate tuition, though bills to allow it have been introduced in 2003, 2004, and 2005 (HB 119, SB 226, SB 2264). They would have made undocumented immigrants eligible if they had resided in Florida for at least three consecutive years immediately preceding college entrance, been accepted at a community college or university, and filed an affidavit of intent to become a permanent resident. However, the bills did not pass (Amrhein, 2004; Biswas, 2005; Miller, 2005; Veciana-Suarez, 2005). A not atypical comment from critics of these bills was the following: "In her zeal to explain why the children of immigrants deserve a taxpayer-financed college education, the reporter who wrote 'For migrant kids, college a dream' falsifies the economic truth. While many immigrants possess exemplary work ethics and are nice people, distorting the truth over mass immigration is unconscionable....The reporter further biases her article by suggesting that out-of-state tuition fees 'prohibit' aliens from attending state colleges. Not so; rather, the students just will need to pay more, the same as generations before them" (Troxell, 2004, p. 15-A).

Student Aid

Current Policy

Over three quarters (77%) of Florida's student aid spending takes the form of grants. However, these grants are allocated mostly on the basis not of need but of academic performance. A little under one quarter (23%) of Florida's 2003-04 disbursements for student aid went to need-based grant aid, which puts it near the bottom of the Achieving the Dream states (Florida Department of Education, 2004a: iv; National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005: 8).⁴

Need-Based Aid

Florida has some eight need-based student aid programs, but the biggest by far is the Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG), which accounts for 91% of all state need-based aid and 21% of all state aid. FSAG makes aid available to U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens who are enrolled in associate or baccalaureate programs at eligible public and private institutions. Except for the Public Part-Time component of FSAG (see below), students must be enrolled for at least 12 credits per term. Funding for FSAG has been on the rise, from \$28.8 million in 1998-99 to \$91 million in 2004-05. The minimum award per academic year is \$200 and the maximum is \$1481 (Armstrong, 2004a: 3; Florida Department of Education, 2004a: iv-v, 5; idem, 2005d; National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005: 19; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

Merit Aid

Merit aid accounts for 59% of state undergraduate aid.⁵ The state's most touted program of financial aid is the Bright Futures Scholarship program, which pays 75-100% of tuition and fees, depending on the student's program and academic qualifications. To qualify, students must have at least a 3.0 weighted GPA in 15 college prep units and either an SAT score of 970 or an ACT score of 20. Occupational students must have at least a 3.0 weighted GPA in 15.5 units and meet the minimum SAT, ACT, or CPT (College Placement Test) scores to place out of remedial education.⁶ According to the Florida Department of Education, over \$268 million was allocated to the Bright Futures Scholarship for the 2004-05 academic school year (Armstrong, 2004a; Florida Department of Education, 2004a: iv-v, 13-14; idem, 2005a; National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005: 13-14; Southern Regional Education Board, 2005: 8; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

The issue has been raised that merit aid disproportionately goes to wealthier students (Heller, 2002). In fact, a study of the Bright Futures program found that in the 1998-99 academic year only 37% of the scholarships went to students with an annual income below \$40,000, but half of

all families had incomes below that figure (Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 1999).

Aid for Special Populations

Part-Time Students. The FSAG program includes dedicated funding for part-time students: the Public Part-Time component. To be eligible, students must enroll for a minimum of 6 credit hours per term (or the equivalent) in an associate or baccalaureate degree program at a state university or community college (Armstrong, 2004a: 3; Florida Department of Education, 2005f).

Undocumented Immigrants. Undocumented immigrants cannot receive state student aid. To be eligible, non-citizens need to be in the United States on a visa (Biswas, 2005; Florida Department of Education, 2005f).

Linking Aid to Tuition Increases

Florida has an informal policy of linking aid and tuition levels only for the Bright Futures program, which is merit based.

Evaluations by Respondents

Many observers have expressed concern about inadequate spending on need-based aid (Couturier, 2005). As a community college president commented, there is “an overbalance of merit-based aid and under balanced need-based aid.” Another participant described the political dynamics surrounding the shift to merit-based aid: “Any funds, scholarship funds, that are attached to performance naturally reward those at the upper level of the middle class and beyond...there has been a huge push on the part of the middle class and upper middle class for legislators to basically help them pay their college cost.”

Policy Proposals from Respondents

Across the board, interviewees felt that the state needs to support more need-based financial aid. When asked where policy action might be needed, the immediate response from one interviewee was “need-based financial aid.” Another simply stated “With regard to financial aid, there is no need to eliminate the present system that favors merit-based aid. What is needed is a more equitable balance of available monies for low-income students.”

When asked how much political support he thought there would be for improving need-based financial aid, one state university official commented: “There’s a lot of talk but when you get it down to the money – and the problem is this commitment in terms of dollars that Florida’s made to merit – they just run out of money. That’s the bottom line.”

Outreach to Potential Students

Low-cost attendance and an open door are not enough to ensure proper access by minority and low-income students. Also important are efforts to reach into the high school, and even earlier, to interest potential students in the idea of going to college

Florida has a wide variety of programs designed to ease the movement of students between high school and college. The Lumina-funded study of Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success (2005) catalogs at least fourteen, ranging from early intervention programs and bridge programs to dual credit and advanced placement. We will focus on those that have the greatest applicability to minority and low-income students.

Current Policy

Early Intervention Programs

Outreach to high schools is explicitly supported by state policy. The legislature created the College Reach Out Program (CROP) in 1983 to motivate and prepare educationally disadvantaged, low-income students in grades 6 through 12 to pursue and successfully complete a postsecondary education (Fla. Stat. 1007.34).⁷ Funds are appropriated by the Legislature to the Department of Education and allocated on a competitive basis to postsecondary institutions submitting proposals. The collaboration between high schools and community colleges includes efforts to prepare students while they are still in high school (early remediation) so that remedial work is not required at the postsecondary level. Participating institutions must maintain continuous contact with students from the time they are selected to postsecondary enrollment (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; Armstrong, 2004a; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005). It is worth noting that despite its national recognition, this program was mentioned by only two interviewees, one of whom commented that “the funding has decreased quite a bit in recent years so that [it] seems to be waning some in level of commitment.”

A tendency to focus on minority, but not low-income, students emerges here as in other states. The required annual report institutions submit regarding their CROP program includes student information on grade level, race, and gender, but no information on socioeconomic status.

In addition to CROP, the state also operates the Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students (www.facts.org), which is an online student advising system supported by the Florida

Department of Education. Moreover, the Division of Community Colleges was awarded funds from the Lumina Foundation to set up the College Goal Sunday program. It will involve designating one Sunday where community college financial aid advisors assist current and potential community college students with completing the paperwork for financial aid (Armstrong, 2004a).

Finally, as part of the Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement (Fla. Stat. 1007.35), all students are encouraged to take the PSAT or PLAN or the College Placement Test in the 10th grade in order to enable high schools to identify those students who may need additional help or who are already prepared to take advanced courses (Southern Regional Education Board, 2005: 8). The funding for this partnership is dependent on annual funding in the General Appropriations Act.

Dual-Credit Programs

Since 1973, the state has provided both the secondary and postsecondary sectors with funding for dual enrollment. The dual-enrollment program includes courses that are creditable toward a vocational certificate, associate degree, or baccalaureate degree. Students enrolled in postsecondary courses that are not creditable toward the high school diploma cannot be classified as dually enrolled. To be eligible, students must pass the College Placement Test and hold a minimum 3.0 unweighted grade point average (for students enrolling in vocational certificate courses, the requirement is a minimum 2.0 unweighted grade point average).⁸ Exceptions to the GPA requirements can be made if the educational institutions agree and the terms of the agreement are contained within their dual enrollment inter-institutional articulation agreement. Both the K-12 system and the community college involved can count the same student in their enrollment funding formulas.⁹ Under Florida law dually enrolled students are not assessed student fees. The fees are waived by the community colleges (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; Education Commission of the States, 2000, 2001; Florida Department of Education, 2004b; Southern Regional Education Board, 2005: 8).

Evaluations by Respondents

With regard to dual enrollment, the state has found that high performing dual-enrollment students graduated from community colleges at higher rates than similar students who did not participate in dual enrollment. High performing students, defined as high school students with a 3.0 GPA or above, were tracked for four years following their high school graduation. For each of the 1994 to 1998 cohorts, the college graduation rate for dual-enrollment students was consistently higher than for non-dual enrollment students. The difference in completion rates of an Associate in Arts degree between dual-enrollment students and non-dual enrollment students was between 12 and 16 percentage points (Armstrong, 2004e).

Unfortunately, the state has also found that dual-enrollment programs seem to be underenrolling minority students. They make up 26% of dual-enrollment participants, but 35% of the general community college student population and 47% of K-12 students (Armstrong, 2004e).

Although dual enrollment was mentioned as a strong policy by a state official, a community college president argued that the current funding formula has undermined it: “as the A+ [state accountability] plan came on board, it recognizes AP as more valuable than dual enrollment. So, by the way, does the funding formula for public schools. There has been a shift I think that will continue away from dual enrollment, towards AP classes in the areas where high schools had the capacity to mount those AP classes.” This president concluded: “I think dual enrollment is on its last legs because many of those courses are not available in the AP format and many of the students just don’t want to be at the high school.” However, a state community college official, while agreeing with the first part of the statement, disagreed that dual enrollment is facing demise, feeling that the state funding formula can accommodate both AP and dual enrollment.

Policy Proposals from Respondents

With regard to FACTS, a community college president felt that policy is needed to require that everyone make better use of it: “FACTS originally was just a transcript sharing model, now it is becoming an education planning model. If FACTS continues to evolve, and I expect it will, that’s going to make a big difference. It is the kind of initiative the state ought to engage in. It is about assuring rapid access to accurate information about one another’s programs and requirements and so on. That is a positive development that I salute. What they haven’t done is say everybody has to use FACTS in these ways.”

Comprehensive Curriculum

One of the ways that minority and low-income students are welcomed into the community college is through programs that are not exclusively academic, including occupational education and adult education.

Current Policy

Occupational Education

The state education code (chap. 1004.65) states that the mission of the community college includes “preparing students directly for careers requiring less than baccalaureate degrees. This may include preparing for job entry, supplementing of skills and knowledge, and responding to needs in new areas of technology.”

Adult General Education

The Florida state education code (chap. 1004.65) puts adult general education in a “secondary role” for community colleges (along with community services and recreational and leisure services). Both community colleges and school districts provide adult education, with the latter actually providing more. A major reason is that adult education was originally and still is to a major extent the province of the K-12 districts.¹⁰ The Adult General Education program in Florida encompasses ABE, ASE, GED, vocational preparation, ESOL/ESL, workplace readiness, and adults with disabilities. Any adult is eligible to receive these services if he or she lacks the basic skills necessary to function effectively in everyday situations, to enter the job market, or to enter certificate career education instruction. The Adult General Education program is funded through state general revenue appropriations and federal “flow through” dollars. Colleges can report the courses above for FTE based funding.

Convenient Access

Especially for students who need to work while in college, access to the community college is greatly aided if community colleges reach out through nontraditional schedules, dispersed locations, and distance education.

Current Policy

Convenient Hours or Locations

The Florida community college system as a whole was originally designed to ease access by physically locating colleges within 50 miles of any individual. However, there are no state policies mandating or providing incentives to community colleges to open satellite facilities or offer courses at nontraditional times.

Distance Education

The state funds distance education enrollments through the state basic FTE funding formula. They receive the same level of funding as other forms of instruction (Education Commission of the States, 2000a: 42).

In 1996 the State Board of Community Colleges established the Florida Distance Learning Consortium (FDLC). In 2003, the FDLC merged with the Florida Virtual Campus resulting in a single online environment to meet the educational needs of all of Florida’s postsecondary students (Florida Distance Learning Consortium, 2004). In the 2002-03 academic year, more than 444,000 students enrolled online. While online access is provided to everyone, one interviewee noted that priority is given to serving Florida students in colleges that are rural or

have a lot of disadvantaged students in order to make sure they have access to advanced courses not traditionally offered in those schools (Couturier, 2005, p. 7).

SUCCESS POLICIES

Access to the community college is clearly not enough. As important is success in the community college. As it happens, all too many students enter the community college desiring a degree but then fail to achieve one.

Public Commitment to Student Success

There is wide recognition that unequal success is an ongoing problem in Florida. The Chancellor of Community Colleges has noted: “Unless the promise of access becomes an empty promise, it must be accompanied by the promise of success. Community colleges must and will work toward closing the current performance gaps among different groups of students. Florida is aware of the performance gaps in areas such as award completion and transfer to the State University System (SUS)...” (Armstrong, 2004d).

However, no explicit performance targets have been set. And one community college president argued that “there is precious little conversation about student performance at any meeting in Tallahassee. The discussion is nearly always budgets and political agendas and how necessary they are. There is very little conversation about student performance at all.” This president then went on to say:

most of [the legislators] believe that because community colleges are open door, there is really not a problem; everybody’s got a chance. Anybody who finishes a high school diploma here by any mechanism can be admitted to a community college. What they don’t know is that the students come to us with tremendously different capacities and backgrounds for dealing with what they’ve learned and we can predict rather accurately whether they are going to obtain any benefit from college based on those background terms. That shouldn’t be true.

Below we examine the following state policies affecting success in the community college: remediation, academic guidance and support, non-academic guidance and support, transfer assistance, baccalaureate provision, noncredit to credit articulation, and workforce and economic development.

Remediation

Many minority and low-income students come into the community college inadequately prepared to do college level study. They therefore need remedial education or developmental education. What does the state do to make sure such remediation is provided effectively?

Current Policy

Florida is notable because it was one of the first states to mandate achievement testing at entry and mandatory placement (National Center for Higher Education and Public Policy, 2004a,b). Below we examine each of the following different features of Florida's remediation policy (Fla. Stat. 1008.30, 1004.68): financing, entrance testing, assignment to remediation, opportunity to take non-remedial course, credit for remedial courses, student aid, who can offer remediation, content of remediation, exiting from remediation, reducing the need for remediation.

Financing

The state supports remediation out of the regular state funding formula. FTE enrollments generated by remedial courses (called college preparatory) are included in the funding process and in the state cost analysis (Education Commission of the States, 2000a: 37-38; Jenkins & Boswell, 2002: 3).

Colleges receive state formula aid for up to two student attempts at a given remediation course. After that, the colleges do not receive state funding. Colleges can still allow a student to take a remedial course for a third time but are allowed to charge the student for the full cost of instruction, though they may reduce fees on an individual basis contingent on the student's financial hardship (Fla. Stat. chap. 1009.28; Jenkins and Boswell, 2002).

State supported remediation is offered only at two-year institutions (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2001, p. 3), with one exception: the one historically black four-year institution in the state. All other four-year colleges must contract with the community colleges.

Entrance Testing

Florida has had mandatory entry level testing since 1985. Students intending to pursue an associate of arts (A.A.) program must take a placement test unless they have a high enough score on the SAT or ACT. By state law, the community colleges all use the College Placement Test (CPT), which tests students in math, reading, and writing. There are common cut scores across both the community college and state university systems (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002: 3; Prince, 2004). A.A. students must complete their remedial work before accumulating 12 hours of lower-division college credit coursework (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2005).

Students intending on pursuing an occupational program must take the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) and must complete their remediation before they finish their program.

Despite these state rules, community colleges introduce a degree of variation in implementation. If a college feels a student has had a bad day, it sometimes retests the student. In addition, there is evidence that not all students get assessed. In a study of remediation practices in two Florida community colleges, Dolores Perin has found that one of those colleges did not test most occupational students. Moreover, that same college waited until students had declared a major before testing them (Perin, 2006).¹¹

Assignment to Remediation

Students who fail to get high enough scores are required by the state to take remediation. Students who fail a section of the College Placement Test are required to take remediation in that skill area. Remediation is confined to the area in which the student needs help (math, reading, or writing). Colleges have discretion over what level of remediation they place students in (Armstrong, 2004a; Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2005).

However, state rules are not always followed. One Florida college issued waivers from remediation if it did not have space for all the students requiring remediation. Moreover, if a student failed the placement test in two areas, that college only required remediation in one. And another Florida college allowed students to take the CPT repeatedly until they passed it and were exempt from remediation (Perin, 2006).

Opportunity to Take Non-Remedial Courses

Students taking remedial courses are allowed by state rules to enroll in non-remedial courses so long as those courses do not require the skills being addressed in the remedial courses (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2005). However, at one Florida college, instructors sometimes overrode course prerequisites to allow remedial students to take college level courses they would ordinarily be barred from until they had completed remediation (Perin, 2006).

Students aspiring to an associate degree or higher must successfully complete their remedial courses before accumulating 12 hours of lower-division college credit coursework (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2005).

Student Eligibility for Financial Aid

Students can receive state student aid while receiving remediation.

Who Can Offer Remediation

Remediation is offered only at two-year institutions, with one exception: the one historically black four-year college can offer remedial education. All other four-year colleges must contract with the community colleges.

Content of Remediation

By state policy, the remedial courses offered must be on the list of remedial common courses.

Credit for Remedial Courses

Remedial courses do not receive credit toward degree requirements (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2005).

Exiting Remediation

There is a state required exit test, which is usually embedded in the course that is the highest level and determines success in a given area. However, using such a test is left to the discretion of the institution. Each college can set its own cut-off score.

Reducing the Need for Remediation

As mentioned above, the state encourages high schools to administer the College Placement Test at the beginning of the 10th grade so that students who require remediation can improve their skills before entering college (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2005: 8). In addition, the state has established the Community College Access Challenge, which appropriates funds to implement joint programs with K-12 partners to improve the skills of students before they reach the community colleges (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2005).

The state also provides high schools – through its Performance on the College Placement Test report – with information about the performance of their graduates on placement tests and the numbers enrolled in remedial courses (Fla. State Board of Education Administrative Rule 6A-10.038; Southern Regional Education Board, 2005: 8).

The state is trying to align high school and community college requirements. The Chancellor for Community Colleges stated: “Florida ... has looked at the impact of college preparatory on successful outcomes along with withdrawing from class or failing those classes.... Florida has been addressing the need for better preparation prior to entering postsecondary as one aspect of

the overall A+ Plan.... The Plan had several components [including] increased standards for student learning as measured on the FCAT” (Armstrong, 2004d).

Evaluations by Respondents

There are concerns about Florida’s “three-peat” policy, which limits the number of times students can repeat a “college prep” (developmental) course before they are supposed to have to pay full cost. The fear is that students may not be fully remediated at the time they exhaust the state subsidy (Couturier, 2005, p. 7).

On the other hand, a minority leader raised the possibility of unnecessary remediation: “there are situations where [institutions] will admit kids to school and hold remediation so strongly over their heads that they will have them retaking courses that they have basically passed.” However, a state community college official argues that colleges have found that many students who barely pass the College Placement Test are really not ready for college level math so they have strongly advised them to take the highest level remedial math course or the intermediate algebra course. However, a community college cannot force students to accept this recommendation if they do not wish to.

Though the state is trying to align high school and community college requirements, concerns remain about the lack of alignment. A community college president noted: “We have a very serious mismatch of curriculum. The Sunshine State skill standards, which are the state’s policy for K-12 curriculum, do not particularly align with our standards for admission placement. For example, the CPT (College Placement Test) isn’t a very good measure of what students are likely to learn from the high school curriculum. So it’s not surprising to find a lot of kids placing into developmental coursework.” Moreover, according to Couturier (2005), “many students do not take higher level math courses in high school, but the general education curriculum in Florida requires college algebra. Therefore, college algebra often becomes a gatekeeper course, keeping students from advancing in their studies” (p.2).

Academic Guidance and Support

The State of Florida provides no specific funding for academic guidance and support. Colleges support it from their general formula funding for instruction. There are no state policies regulating the form and content of academic guidance and support.

Non-Academic Guidance and Support

The State of Florida provides no specific funding for non-academic guidance and support. Colleges support it from their general formula funding for student support services. There are no state policies regulating the form and content of non-academic guidance and support.

Transfer Assistance

Current Policy

Florida is well known for the extensiveness of its efforts in support of transfer. The relationship between Florida's community colleges and four-year institutions is characterized as a 2 + 2 system, signifying recognition that the majority of Florida's baccalaureate students begin their postsecondary education at public community colleges. Private colleges are very involved in these transfer arrangements.

Student Aid

There is no state-level student aid program that focuses on transfer students, though some of the state universities have programs of their own.

Transfer Advising

There is no earmarked state funding for transfer advising at community colleges. Instead, funding for transfer advising and articulation information comes out of the state funding for student support services generally. There are no standards for transfer advising in terms of the types of advising offered, who can advise students, advisor/advisee ratios, etc.

The state supports an extensive online student advising system – Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students (FACTS) (www.facts.org) – that provides transfer information and advice.

Transfer of Academic Associate Degrees

Students graduating with an academic associate degree are guaranteed admission to one of the public universities, junior status, and completion of the lower-division general education requirements at the receiving college. Florida law (Fla. Stat. chap. 1007.23) states that “every associate in arts graduate of a community college shall have met all general education requirements and must be granted admission to the upper division of a state university except to a limited access or teacher certification program or a major program requiring an audition” (see also Florida Department of Education, 2005e).¹²

Occupational Education Transfer

Regarding the transfer of occupational degree (AS) students, state law requires that the Florida Board of Education establish a statewide articulation agreement that must, among other things, address the issue of transfer of occupational credits (Fla. Stat. chap. 1007.23). The state statute holds that: “The articulation agreement must guarantee the statewide articulation of appropriate courses within associate in science¹³ degree programs to baccalaureate degree programs. Courses within an associate in applied science degree program may articulate into a baccalaureate degree program on an individual or block basis as authorized in local interinstitutional articulation agreements.”

This is amplified by the administrative rules of the State Board of Education, chap. 6A-10.024. One provision states: “Beginning fall term 2000, all graduates of a Florida community college associate in science degree program listed in the Statewide Articulation Manual shall be granted admission to any of the universities in the State University System in the program designated to articulate with their degree, except for limited access programs and those requiring specific grades on particular courses for admission.” Another adds: “Every associate in science degree graduate of a Florida community college program that articulates with an interdisciplinary capstone degree program in a Florida public or private university shall be guaranteed admission to that program except for limited access programs and those requiring specific grades on particular courses for admission” (Florida Department of Education, 2005e).

At this time, the state is working on defining transferability for specific programs such as nursing.¹⁴ The state now has seven occupational programs -- covering about one-third of all occupational students -- that are guaranteed state-wide transferability.

Florida also has rules governing transfer between postsecondary occupational programs run by the school districts and those run by community colleges. State law (Fla. Stat. chap. 1007.23) stipulates that “the articulation agreement must guarantee the statewide articulation of appropriate workforce development programs and courses between school districts and community colleges and specifically provide that every applied technology diploma graduate must be granted the same amount of credit upon admission to an associate in science degree or associate in applied science degree program unless it is a limited access program.”

General Education Transfer

As noted above, students with an academic associate degree are guaranteed by statute (Fla. Stat. chap. 1007.23) that they will be treated as having met all the general education requirements at the public university. For students who do not have an associate degree, the state guarantees that the receiving university will accept the 36-credit general education core defined by their community college as having fulfilled the general education core at the university even if the community college’s core is not entirely the same as the receiving university’s. And if a student has completed only a portion of the community college general education core (as would usually be the case for students with occupational associate degrees), the courses taken will apply toward the university general education core (Florida Department of Education, 2005e: secs. 3 and 6).

Specific Major Modules

According to state law the Florida Department of Education is required to identify transfer modules for specific majors so as to ease the transfer of courses in the major that students have taken at the community colleges (Fla. Statute chap. 1007.25): “The department shall identify common prerequisite courses and course substitutions for degree programs across all institutions. Common degree program prerequisites shall be offered and accepted by all state universities and community colleges... The department shall develop a centralized database containing the list of courses and course substitutions that meet the prerequisite requirements for each baccalaureate degree program.” Any major that has prerequisites has to have them listed in the *Common Prerequisites Manual*. But as one of our interviewees noted, the fact that certain prerequisites are supposed to hold statewide does not mean that all state universities adhere to them. For a given major, a number of universities hold to certain prerequisites in common, while others define unique ones. This may become even more common now that the universities have their own individual boards of trustees.

Common Course Numbering

The state has legislatively mandated a common course numbering system in order to ease the transfer of courses among public institutions (Fla. Stat. 1007.24-25). According to the Florida Student Transfer Brochure, “all public universities, community colleges, postsecondary vocational-technical centers, and a number of private postsecondary institutions use this numbering system. SCNS classifies courses according to subject matter. A course is guaranteed to transfer to a participating institution that offers a course with that same number.” The statewide course numbering system was designed to improve coordination between public education institutions. State law (Fla. Stat. chap. 1007.23) guarantees that “any student who transfers among postsecondary institutions that are fully accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education and that participate in the statewide course numbering system shall be awarded credit by the receiving institution for courses satisfactorily completed by the student at the previous institutions.” Furthermore, “credits awarded pursuant to this subsection shall satisfy institutional requirements on the same basis as credits awarded to native students.”

Evaluations by Respondents

On the whole, interviewees felt that Florida’s transfer and articulation policies work quite well. As a community college president put it, “the 2+2 program has been a manifest success and it shows itself in two ways. One is that we have seven of the top ten associate degree producing colleges in America...the second evidence is that we have the highest percentage of bachelor’s degree students with an associate degree background in Florida.”

However, this approval does not mean that problems do not remain. One concerns the fact that guaranteed transfer does not necessarily mean access to the institution or major of one's choice. In the case of majors, Florida has addressed the problem of difficulty of entering certain majors by developing common prerequisites. However, this has not obviated the problem. As a minority group leader noted:

Programs like engineering, five-year business programs, pharmacy programs, some allied health programs, these have become limited access...a youngster might graduate with an AS or AA from a community college and will not be able to gain access to those programs as they should be, because they did not begin their studies at the university. That has caused some heartache. And to multiply the heartache, the governor and the legislature of Florida have developed this seamless education crap....While they did that they did not consider the limited access programs, which means their seamlessness makes no sense.

Another issue concerns the transferability of occupational programs that do not yet have systemwide articulation agreements. Particularly if absent such an agreement, an AS student is less likely to get admitted because universities have more leeway – in evaluating the curriculum and/or the transcript coming out of a particular AS program – to refuse to transfer credits. AS graduates may be told that they do not have the foundation courses and be required to take them again.

Baccalaureate Provision

Current Policy

In recent years, authority was given to the State Board of Education (Fl. Stat. sec. 1007.33 and 1004.73) to approve the offering of limited baccalaureate degrees at selected community colleges. Six community colleges are authorized to offer baccalaureates: Miami-Dade, St. Petersburg, Chipola, Okaloosa-Walton, Edison, and Daytona (Florida Department of Education, 2005g; Floyd, 2005: 37).

In addition, virtually all of the community colleges have established university centers on their campuses where four-year colleges and universities offer upper-division courses that are creditable toward baccalaureate degrees at their campuses. As one observer noted, “the university center concept...was used in Michigan and Texas and several other places for several years before we used it. The college attracted, first of all, private institutions to come in for the last two years of the baccalaureate program. Now we have some agreements with some of public universities that will do that.” These university centers do not receive specific state funding. However, the state provides indirect support insofar as the threat of a community college being able to get permission to establish a baccalaureate program prompts a university to be receptive to a community college's request for university courses on its campus.

Evaluations by Respondents

Several of our interviewees felt that there was a real need for community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees in fields such as teaching and nursing. A community college official argued: “I don’t think Florida can solve this teacher ed problem unless they bring community colleges in a significantly different and bigger way.” They felt that this development was a necessary response to university reluctance to offer articulation arrangements for the community college applied associate or AS degree: “Part of what generated that was the difficulty community colleges have had with our state universities trying to develop articulation agreements for students with AS degrees going into a four year program, and universities really weren’t much interested in offering this or creating the time.” Another interviewee commented that the “issue would have no legs at all if the universities were doing what they are supposed to do.”

At the same time, others raised questions about possible repercussions on the traditional community college mission. A community college president argued: “I think we can take the country’s best community college and turn them into... a mediocre university system.” And a minority group leader commented: “I’m forever at odds with [name of well-known community college] because they are highlighting bachelor’s degrees more than associate degrees... I think it’s an atrocity, because it destroys the very reason that we developed community colleges in the first place... I’m not saying it’s bad but I’m saying well let’s not forget what we were founded to do. And that is to take the ordinary student and bring that student where they need to be, to function comprehensively.” On the other hand, a state community college official did not see a problem: “the primary mission of these institutions will remain that of an open door community college ...[and] do this additional mission.”¹⁵

Another concern involves whether the baccalaureate-granting institutions will start to differentiate themselves from other community colleges. As a community college president noted, “Four or five of our colleges now are offering baccalaureate degrees. At present, the President’s Council has been sort of hammering this into our overall mission and it is not easy because these guys start marching off on their own and doing other things... we’ve got to figure out how to raise this with policy debate with the powers that be within the state level. I don’t know how to solve this issue.”

Finally, there is also concern that important policy is being made by drift and default rather than careful consideration. As a community college president noted, “This is a very serious public policy and it is happening by default.” He felt these policy changes need to occur in a more deliberate manner. “You do see how these things [referring to policy] evolve, but it just bums the daylights out of me that even in a state that has so much public policy debate we are just backing into these issues.” A state official added: “I think probably the best way that the legislature or state agency can handle [balancing the tension] is to make sure you don’t let the colleges narrow their vision. Make sure that the major part of their mission is still to provide access to postsecondary education. In the community, don’t close the open door. Don’t let these institutions become exclusive...” A community college president went a bit further. He would encourage community colleges not to offer baccalaureate degrees but rather to set up university centers in partnership with four-year colleges: “What I’d rather do is partner... because they [university centers] are proven successful.”

Noncredit To Credit Articulation

Current Policy

The only state policy to support the transfer of students and credits from noncredit training to credit training is an articulation agreement regarding transfer between area vocational centers and community colleges (see above). However, there is no state policy supporting or governing movement between the noncredit and credit sides of a community college (such as between adult education and credit programs or between noncredit certificate programs and credit associate programs).

Evaluations by Respondents

Even with the articulation agreement regarding transfer between area vocational centers and community colleges, there have been problems trying to build career ladders between the two. A major reason is that only credit courses transfer. “Clock hour” certification programs do not transfer. Also, and perhaps more importantly, the technical centers and community colleges are accredited by different organizations: the Council of Education for the technical centers and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for the community colleges. The two groups have different requirements for faculty credentials.

Policy Proposals from Respondents

Transfer of certificate level occupational programs (even those started in high school or postsecondary vocational centers) is currently being worked on because significant numbers of students who are low income start there. A workforce task force led by the Lieutenant Governor is focusing on articulation and transferability of all kinds of credit.

Workforce and Economic Development

Current Policy

The Florida state education code (sec. 1004.65) states that the mission of the community college includes: “Promoting economic development for the state within each community college district through the provision of special programs, including, but not limited to, the Enterprise Florida-related programs; Technology transfer centers; Economic development centers; Workforce literacy programs.” As can be seen below in the discussion of performance accountability, that system includes measures pertaining to workforce and economic development such as proportion of program completers who are placed in jobs paying more than \$10 an hour. And until 2000, Florida maintained a performance funding system, the Workforce Education Development Fund

(WEDF), that applied to as much as 5% of the total community college budget (Dougherty & Hong, in press).

Evaluations by Respondents

It is clear that the Workforce Education Development Fund did succeed in making community colleges put greater effort into workforce preparation and economic development. However, the WEDF also encountered a number of obstacles and experienced significant unanticipated negative consequences (Dougherty & Hong, in press). They are discussed in the next section, dealing with performance accountability.

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Florida has had the most extensive performance accountability system of the five initial Achieving the Dream states. Its performance reporting system dates back to 1991, and its performance funding system to 1996. However, its actual breadth of implementation and impact have been less than originally intended. Part of the performance funding system established in 1997 (the Workforce Educational Development Fund) was repealed in 2000. Subsequently, though the state legislated in 2003 that 10% of state appropriations for all levels of education be affected by the performance of the educational system (Fla. Stat. 1008.31), in the end the Florida Department of Education recommended repealing this provision, and the Legislature did so in 2005 (Florida Department of Education, 2005b).

Current Policy

Performance Indicators

The State of Florida collects and reports a wide variety of measures on the performance of its community college system. Many of them drive its small performance funding system (Performance Based Budgeting or PB2). Below we discuss the performance measures used in either the performance reporting or performance funding systems. They are brought together in Appendix Table A1 below.

The Florida performance reporting system incorporates several different measures that target different points in students' progression through community college. Many are publicly reported through the annual community college system *Fact Book*, as well as the *Annual Equity Update*, the *Articulation Report*, and the data posted to the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) website. However, several measures are only reported to the colleges themselves.

Access Indicators

The state reports data on the racial and income composition of community college students. However, the income data only take the form of whether students are Pell grant recipients.

Success Indicators

For those seeking an associate of arts and of science degree who earned at least 18 credit hours and those seeking a postsecondary vocational certificate who earned at least 9 credits, the state reports the following:

Retention: The state reports fall to fall retention to the Southern Regional Education Board for its State Data Exchange. These data are for the community college system as a whole and are not broken down by individual college or by student race or income.

Remedial success (3 measures): The state reports to community colleges the rate of completion of the highest level remedial course within two years for first-time students tested into and enrolled in college prep (remedial) courses in, respectively, reading, writing, and math. The data are broken down by student race but not income.

Student learning: The state reports to the community colleges the rate of passage for the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) for rising juniors with 60 or more hours accumulated. These results are not reported by student race or income.

Graduation: The state reports publicly the number of students receiving associate degrees and certificates in a given year, broken down by student race. It also reports to the Legislature the number of associate degrees received, broken down by both student race and income (defined by eligibility for either Pell, SEOG, or Florida need-based aid).

Graduation and retention: The state reports to the community colleges the percentage of students who graduated (received an award), were still enrolled, or had left in good standing (with a GPA of at least 2.0) four years after entering the community college. The data are not reported by race or income.

Time to degree (graduation efficiency): For PB2, the state reports to the Legislature on the number of completers graduating with an associate degree in less than 72 credit hours. These data are not reported by student race or income.

Transfer: The state reports publicly and to the Legislature (as part of PB2) how many students transferred to the state university system. The public report is broken down by student race.

Transfer student success: The state reports to the community colleges – for students who earned their associate of arts degree at only one community college before transferring – the percentage

who achieved a GPA of at least 2.5 at the university. The data are not broken down by student race or income.

Licensure placement rate: As a measure of program quality, the state reports to the community colleges the percentage of licensure program graduates (associate of science and certificate, such as emergency medical technicians) who pass the licensure exam (if available) for their respective vocational program. The data are not reported by student race or income.

Job placement (three measures): The state publicly reports the percentage of associate and certificate graduates and leavers found to be employed after graduation. For the associate degree and certificate holders, the state also reports how many have found work in occupations related to their training and how many continue their training. The data are not broken down by student race or income.

Wage placement: The state reports to the Legislature (as part of PB2) the number of program completers who are placed in jobs paying more than \$10 an hour. The data are not reported by student race or income.

For the race disaggregations, the minorities considered are Hispanics and African Americans, with the classifications based on federal guidelines. For low-income students, the state mainly uses receipt of a Pell grant as its “proxy.” The state hopes to disaggregate by finer income categories, but it is not yet doing this.

Appendix Table A1 below lists the measures making up the state’s current performance reporting and performance funding systems and whether those measures are disaggregated by race and income (Pell receipt).

Data Collection

Florida has a data warehouse containing data on students K-20. The data warehouse was one of the major fruits of the unification in 2000 of the all the levels of education in one state department of education. At this time, the various data sources are not fully compatible. However, the community colleges, universities, and the K-12 system are working together to ensure that their data will be compatible with community college data so that it will be possible to track students and provide similar data for all three systems (Armstrong, 2004a, 2005a).

Connection of Performance Measures to State Funding

In Florida, outcome data have been used to partially determine funding for community colleges. At this time, the Performance Based Budgeting (PB2) system is the only performance funding system still in place, and it applies to only about 1% of the community college budget. PB2 first came into operation in 1996. It typically has amounted to about 1% of total state appropriations for the community college and about 0.5% of total community college revenues from all sources. The PB2 measures are not publicly reported but rather are reported to the Legislature. However,

many of the measures overlap those publicly reported. The measures that have been used to allocate funds have been the following:

- number of hours generated by dual-enrollment students divided by 60.
- number of completers of remedial education.
- completers of associate of arts degrees, broken down by special populations: college prep (remedial), economically disadvantaged, disabled, black males, limited English proficiency.
- transfers to state university system (with or without associate of arts degree).
- completers graduating with an associate of arts degree in less than 72 credit hours (time to degree).
- program completers who are placed in jobs paying more than \$10 an hour.

The Workforce Education Development Fund (1997-2000) applied to the following programs: adult general education, technical certificate, applied technology diploma (ATD), technical degree, apprenticeship, and continuing workforce education (Florida Department of Education, 2000). The WDEF only operated for three years, between 1997-98 and 1999-2000, and then it lapsed because of lack of funding by the Legislature. When it was in operation, it accounted for nearly 6% of state funding for community college operations (and thus about 3% of total community college revenues from all sources) (Wright, Dallet, & Copa, 2002).

Funds were allocated on the following basis:

- number of completions for adult basic education, vocational certificates, and vocational associate of science degrees (AS/AAS) for students with targeted attributes (economically disadvantaged, welfare recipients, disabled, dislocated, ESL).
- job placement, with placement in higher wages generating more points for community colleges.

There is some sentiment, particularly from the larger community colleges, to move toward an “equalization formula” instead of or in addition to performance funding. As one community college president put it, “We are interested in a level playing field...by having an equalization formulation or actually more of an equalization process like the funding formula, everybody starts at an equal playing field so then if you add performance and growth measures onto that, we are at least starting at the start line together.” This concept has been around for years, but the interviewee felt that this may be the right time for such a change.

Evaluations by Respondents

The measures used for performance accountability in Florida have attracted some criticism, particularly the one for graduation. The fact that it is applied only to first-time in college, degree seeking students (both full time and part time) who have already accumulated 18 credit hours means that it focuses on students more likely to graduate, thus potentially inflating the graduation rate (Couturier, 2005).

Use of Data by State Officials to Craft State Policies

It is unclear to what degree the community college outcome data shape how state officials make policy with regard to access or success. In general, it is quite clear that state community college officials look carefully at the numbers. However, those community college officials are not at all sure if legislators do the same when they go to craft state policy. For example, a Florida state official noted: “We certainly look at those numbers....[The Chancellor] shares them with the rest of the folks in DOE all the time. Having watched some of the legislative processes, how much they are actually used I am not sure.”

Use by Community Colleges

There is some skepticism about whether performance funding has much impact on the community college. One interviewee noted that performance funding “works really well until one of the big areas with a lot of legislative power doesn’t get as much money as it thinks it should and you put a device in the budget holding them harmless making sure they get as much money as they did last year.” Another interviewee commented on the inability for the funds to really impact institutions given the small amount of performance funding compared with the annual budget of colleges:

The difficulty is that in a billion dollar state budget the performance based budget is seven and a half million. There is not enough there...Nobody sits down and calculates what their PBB allocation would be if they put performance into the realm. It is nonrecurring money. It has to be budgeted and earned every year so it is part of your base....When you run the numbers, they don’t move that fast. Nobody takes a 10% increase or gets a 10% loss. The factors are so complicated they buffer one another and what you end up with is half a percent or a quarter percent on your budget. While it may be noticeable one way or the other again it is in the rounding area so people don’t organize their activity around generating higher performance on the factors that are going to be measured. They may be paying attention to for all the right reasons, but it is not because to get the money.

A study of performance accountability in six states including Florida (Dougherty & Hong, in press) asked Florida state community college officials and officials of three local community colleges to detail what actions the colleges took in response to state accountability requirements in the areas of improved remediation, retention and graduation, transfer, and job placement. The responses can be seen in Table 1 below, which lists whether the chief state official in charge of accountability and how many of the community colleges indicated that community colleges had responded. However, though these Florida community colleges indicated that they had responded to the state accountability demands, the evidence is rather weak that these demands resulted in significant impacts on performance, as measured by the performance of the Florida community college system in comparison to states with weaker performance accountability systems (Dougherty and Hong, in press).

Whatever its degree of realization of intended outcomes, performance funding in Florida encountered a number of obstacles and unanticipated consequences. The obstacles included lack of stability in the performance measures used and the weight attached to a given measure. As a local community college official noted about the Workforce Educational Development Fund (1997-2000), “About 58% of the workforce appropriation was put into this competitive fund where a better job you did, the more you got and it all looked pretty well on paper, but you have a major community college that suddenly discovers at the end of the year they haven’t really earned any money. They have a lot of votes in the legislature [so] that program’s [the WEDF] probably not got a rosy future. We are still looking, we are still modifying, still looking for better ways to do that and better ways to fund it.”

Table 1

Reports of Community Colleges Responding to State Accountability Demands

| Indicator of Responsiveness | Number of Reports |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Responsiveness to remediation demands | 3 CCs (out of 3 in study) |
| 2. Responsiveness to retention and graduation demands | 3 CCs (out of 3) State official |
| 3. Responsiveness to transfer demands | 1 CC (out of 3) |
| 4. Responsiveness to job placement demands | 2 CCs (out of 3) State official |
| 5. Total count (unduplicated) of responsiveness | 3 CCs (out of 3) State official |

The intended impacts of performance accountability are not the only ones at issue. Impacts not intended by state policymakers occur as well. They include a weakening of academic standards, possible constriction of open door admissions and narrowing of institutional mission, and significant costs of complying with accountability demands. The weakening of academic standards has resulted in faculty sometimes feeling pressed by their college administrators to avoid giving out failing grades and in the elimination of courses and course content that, while

barriers to graduation, may also be important elements of the preparation of educated people. So far, the constriction of the open door has only involved instances of making certain programs more selective in order to elevate their retention and graduation rates by limiting the intake of less prepared students. The final unintended impact of performance accountability is that it can impose considerable compliance costs on community colleges in the form of large outlays to collect and report required data. (For more on these issues, see Dougherty & Hong, in press).

Policy Proposals from Respondents

Given the relatively small amount of money associated with performance funding, a community college president proposed that public disclosure of results would be a far more effective method of encouraging performance. “My suggestion would be...the public disclosure, printing and sharing with the boards of trustees, ranking on every measure, for example, would get a lot of attention. That would get more attention than money. Ultimately what’s lost in the accountability discussion is that accountability has to be a public process or it is no process at all.” Politically, the interviewee also felt it would be possible, “I think the state board of education would support it whole heartedly, I think the legislature would support it.”

In addition, these information resources need to be developed in ways to support the seamless educational environment of a K-20 system. One of our respondents stated: “You would think a K-20 system would have a K-20 understanding of data and the way to do that is through intelligent data warehouses. I think the state could do really useful work by creating appropriate data warehousing facilities and enabling us to use that data for our own planning across all the sectors...I think there are good people in the state right now who are making that argument and having little success, but it is not a major initiative as it should be.” The state is now in the midst of a major project with Microsoft to use information from the data warehouse to guide planning at a pilot community college (Florida Department of Education, 2005d).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Florida is distinctive among the five states in a number of ways. It has been the most active across the policy areas we have focused on, enacting state policies in 25 of 40 areas. Moreover, the state’s policymaking activity has had some distinctive foci: remediation, transfer, and performance accountability (including very extensive data collection).

That is not to say that there are not important areas where Florida can engage in further policymaking activity. Florida could benefit from addressing the needs of undocumented students, providing more need-based aid, establishing funding and standards for guidance and counseling, providing state aid for transfer students, facilitating noncredit to credit transfer, addressing the possible negative side effects of the growing baccalaurization movement among community colleges, and considering new performance measures.

As noted above, Florida – unlike Texas and New Mexico – does not have legislation expressly guaranteeing college access, instate tuition, and state student aid for undocumented students. Certainly, the undocumented population is nowhere the size of Texas’s 5%, but it has been estimated to be 2.1% of all Florida residents, a number that rivals New Mexico, which also has legislated benefits for undocumented students (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). And the same argument may hold for Florida as for Texas that higher education for the undocumented population may be key to the state’s economic future.

It is clear that Florida also needs to consider increasing its provision of need-based aid. The need-based proportion of its student aid funds is among the lowest among the five states, and this plays a role in why tuition takes up a larger share of the income of poorer families in Florida than in the other AtD states.

Like the other Achieving the Dream states, Florida does not provide any dedicated state funding or standards for academic, non-academic, and transfer counseling. Yet, it is clear that good counseling – especially if it does not entail preconceived ideas of what jobs less advantaged students are destined for – can play an important role in expanding opportunity. The lack of dedicated funding and state standards leaves it at the mercy of the vicissitudes of community college funding and the belief that counseling is a frill that can be done on the cheap when other demands are pressing.

Besides funds and standards for transfer guidance and counseling, one other area where Florida could usefully improve its transfer policies is to provide student aid specifically targeted to transfer students, since their needs are different from those of students just entering college.

Florida is also like the other Achieving the Dream states in that it does not do much at the state level to facilitate student movement from noncredit to credit programs. Such facilitation is particularly important for minority and low-income students who often enter the community college through the noncredit side and yet could greatly benefit from the greater labor market returns attendant to having a degree.

Florida’s venture into allowing community colleges to offer the baccalaureate degrees is an exciting development, but one that needs to be carefully supervised. Giving community colleges the ability to give baccalaureate degrees will help them better meet the baccalaureate expectations of many of their students (Dougherty, 1994, 2002). At the same time, many organizational and policy issues need to be faced (such as how the new programs are to be staffed, financed, and accredited), and it is crucial that the new four-year colleges not abandon their commitment to the open door and a comprehensive curriculum.

Finally, Florida has made notable efforts to support the institutional research capacity of community colleges but this may still be an area deserving further attention in the form of funding and training, directed particularly to under-resourced colleges.

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ENDNOTES

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² Calculations were made by H. Kenny Nienhusser and Nathan Walker from data in a database maintained by the American Association of Community Colleges.

³ The average nonresident tuition and required fees were \$7,011 (Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 10).

⁴ However, the Southern Regional Education Board (2005) puts the need-based aid share of total state student aid at 31%.

⁵ Besides need-based and merit-based aid, 18% of undergraduate aid is accounted for by “special purpose awards” (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005).

⁶ These are the main ways to qualify. Other qualification paths are outlined as well (Florida Department of Education, 2004a).

⁷ According to state statute sec. 1007.34: “There is established a college reach-out program to increase the number of low-income educationally disadvantaged students in grades 6-12 who, upon high school graduation, are admitted to and successfully complete postsecondary education. Participants should be students who otherwise would be unlikely to seek admission to a community college, state university, or independent postsecondary institution without special support and recruitment efforts.”

⁸ According to Florida state statute 2003 (Title XLVIII, Ch. 1011, 1011.62), “No student enrolled in college credit mathematics or English dual-enrollment instruction shall be funded as a dual enrollment unless the student has successfully completed the relevant section of the entry-level examination required pursuant to s. 1008.30.”

⁹ According to Florida state statute 2003 (Title XLVIII, Ch. 1011, 1011.62), “Calculation of full-time equivalent membership with respect to instruction from community colleges or state universities. Students enrolled in community college or university dual-enrollment instruction pursuant to s. 1007.271 may be included in calculations of full-time equivalent student memberships for basic programs for grades 9 through 12 by a district school board. Such students may also be calculated as the proportional shares of full-time equivalent enrollments they generate for the community college or university conducting the dual-enrollment instruction.”

¹⁰ However, the state education code (chap. 1004.65) also states that “postsecondary academic and career education programs and adult general education programs shall have first priority in community college funding.”

¹¹ This study is based on the Community College Research Center’s National Field Study of 15 community colleges in six states. Two of those colleges were in Florida.

¹² There does not appear to be any mechanism to ensure that students get admitted by at least one of the state universities. However, because some of the state universities are less selective than others, it is likely that students turned down by one of the top-tier state universities apply to and get accepted by one of the lower-tier ones.

¹³ In Florida, the associate of science is an occupational degree.

¹⁴ Nursing is an AS program, but education is an AA program.

¹⁵ The state legislation authorizing the community colleges to provide baccalaureate degrees explicitly states that the colleges must maintain the community college mission.

APPENDIX TABLE A1

Florida Outcomes Data

[illegible]

| Measure | Reported to Public | | | Reported to Legislature only | | | Reported only to community colleges | | |
|---|--------------------|--|--|------------------------------|-----|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| | FETPIP | | | | | | | | |
| Job placement: Percentage of AA, AS, and certificate graduates found to be employed | FETPIP | | | | | | | | |
| Job placement: Percentage of AS and certificate graduates employed in jobs related to their instruction | FETPIP | | | | | | PR | | |
| Job placement: Percentage of AS and certificate graduates continuing training | FETPIP | | | | | | | | |
| Wage placement: Program completers who are placed in jobs paying more than \$10 an hour | | | | | PB2 | | | | |

Notes:

SES: Pell receipt or not.

Sources:

All measures on table are from Student Data Base except for transfer, job placement, and time to degree. For latter the state uses SUS (state university system), FETPIP (Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program), and institutionally provided data. For the Student Data Base, the state does collect data on, e.g., race, Pell status, etc. but it usually does not publish data broken down by race and income.

* AEU: *Annual Equity Update* report goes to the state Board of Education. It focuses mostly on faculty; there is little on enrollment. Available: http://www.fldoe.org/CC/OSAS/Equity/EQUITY_FORM_2001_MBE.htm. 2004-05 summary

* AR: *Articulation Report*. Available: http://www.firm.edu/doe/arm/cctemis/pubs/articulation/artic00-02/artic00_02.htm

* FETPIP: Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program. Available: <http://www.firm.edu/doe/fetpip/ccs.htm>

* FB: *Fact Book*. Issued annually by the Board of Education.

* PR: Performance Reporting. Reported to colleges but not made public in reports or postings to the Department of Education website.

* PB2: Performance Based Budgeting. Reported to the Legislature and the colleges. Data are largely not broken down by race or income. The only one is the number of AA's, which is only broken down by approximate race and income categories: race (insofar as Black males and ESL students are two of the special populations for which AA's are broken down) and income (economically disadvantaged is another special population). Economically disadvantaged is defined by receipt of Pell, SEOG, TANF, or Food Stamps.

* SREB: Reported to the Southern Regional Education Board for its State Data Exchange. These data are for the system as a whole and are not broken down by institution (<http://www.sreb.org/main/EdData/DataExch/dataexchindex.asp>).

CHAPTER THREE

NEW MEXICO¹

New Mexico is one of the five states that are involved in the Achieving the Dream (AtD) initiative. It also is a state that is involved with the Ford Bridges to Opportunity project.

In many respects, the state is behind some of the other AtD states in the extensiveness of state policy affecting access to, and success in, community colleges for minority and low-income students. However, the state community college system and, to a considerable extent, the current state political leadership are very committed to extensive state policy development to have the system better address the needs of those students. It is this drive that underpins the state's involvement in both Achieving the Dream and the Bridges to Opportunity project.

In 2005, the state made sweeping changes in its higher education governance system. A legislative enactment (CS/HB 745) established a cabinet-level Higher Education Department, which subsumed the weak Commission on Higher Education and has an advisory board with representatives from the different kinds of colleges, including community colleges. The legislature also made several important changes in community college policy, including making state aid available to undocumented immigrants and mandating common course numbering in order to ease transfer.

In what follows, we first set the stage by describing the state context: the size and composition of the state population, its economic structure, the structure of the community college system, its governance and finance; and the enrollment demands it faces. We then describe the state's policies affecting access to and success in the community college for low-income students and students of color. As we go along, we note the evaluations of those policies by various political actors whom we interviewed and the policy proposals they made.

Our information is the product of intensive interviews with a wide variety of community college stakeholders in New Mexico and analysis of a wide range of documents produced both by state agencies and external organizations such as the Education Commission of the States and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. We interviewed state community college officials, state legislators and staff, gubernatorial advisors, top officials of three community colleges, and leaders of local community organizations representing low-income residents and various minority groups in the state. The three community colleges represented different types – urban, small town, and rural – located in different parts of the state.

THE STATE CONTEXT

Population Size and Composition

Approximately 1.9 million people resided in New Mexico in 2003, making the state the 36th most populous in the nation. In that year, 85% of the population racially identified itself as white, 2% as Black/African American, 1% as Asian or Pacific Islander, 10% as American Indian, and 1% as of two or more races. Meanwhile, 43% identified ethnically as Hispanic or Latino; these individuals can be of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005: 24).

Between 2001-02 and 2013-14, the composition of public high school graduates in New Mexico is expected to change considerably. While the income distribution of the high school graduates will probably not change much over the next decade, the racial-ethnic composition will. The minority share of high-school graduates is projected to rise from 58 percent in 2001-02 to 66 percent in 2013-14, with Hispanics accounting for almost all this increase (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003).

The unique population composition of New Mexico – particularly the very large Latino population and large American Indian community – is a present factor as it relates to policy formation for both the minority and low-income populations. New Mexico recently defined the term minority to include the Hispanic and Native American populations.

Economic Structure

New Mexico's economy is heavily dependent on natural resource extraction, agriculture, and tourism. During the early part of this new millennium, the gross state product rose steadily, due to the boom in natural resource extraction. However, New Mexico is still a poor state. As of 2004, the state's gross state product was \$60.9 billion, 37th largest in the nation. The state per capita personal income in 2004 was only 47th in the nation, at \$26,191 in 2004. And the state's poverty rate averaged 18% over the years 2002-2003, which put it well above the national average of 12.3% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2005a, b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

Nature of the Community College System

New Mexico has 19 public two-year colleges: 9 independent community colleges and 10 branch community colleges (branches of state universities) and instructional centers (New Mexico Commission on Higher Education, 2003).² They accounted for 55% of total credit enrollments in New Mexico institutions of higher education in 2001 (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 13).

Strikingly, 95% of New Mexico's community colleges meet the eligibility criteria for the Achieving the Dream initiative: at least 33% of the students are of minority background and/or at least 50% of the students are eligible for federal Pell need-based student aid.

Governance and Finance of the Community Colleges

The New Mexico Higher Education Department is the statewide coordinating agency for all higher education, overseeing all postsecondary institutions, including two-year, four-year, career and special institutions. The Department is a cabinet-level agency established in 2005 to replace the Commission on Higher Education.³ One of the difficult tasks of this new Department is defining the state role in community college governance, given that the political culture of the community colleges is one of decentralization and autonomy. In fact, to the degree that there has been a state community college system, it has resided more in the active role of the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (NMACC). Because the Commission on Higher Education (recently replaced by a new Higher Education Department) had evidenced little interest in the community colleges, the NMACC emerged as the de facto coordinating body for the community colleges, creating a legislative agenda for them and encouraging similar programming among the colleges.

These patterns may change with the emergence of the Higher Education Department (Terrell, 2005). Aiding the community colleges is the fact that the new Secretary of Higher Education, Beverlee McClure, had been president of Clovis Community College. She plans to work on "keeping New Mexico students in New Mexico by improving opportunities in higher education" and provide more "need-based" financial aid to help students attend college (Massey, 2005).

The independent community colleges have their own governing boards, which are mostly elected. The branch campuses are ultimately responsible to the governing boards of the University of New Mexico and New Mexico State University. However, the branch campuses do have advisory boards, some of which are elected and some of which are appointed (Education Commission of the States, 2003b; Renz, 1999: 301-302).

The major source of revenue for community college operations – as of the 2003-04 fiscal year – was state government, accounting for 58% of all revenues, followed by local tax levies (24%), tuition and fees (15%), and then other sources (3%) (New Mexico Commission on Higher Education, 2003: 36). The state appropriation assumes that community colleges will charge a certain minimum level of tuition and set a certain minimum local tax assessment. More specifically, the legislature sets a tuition credit, an amount that it expects community colleges to charge and that is deducted from their state appropriations (Renz, 1999: 303).

In recent years, state appropriations have certainly gone in favor of the community colleges. While all the other states in nation, with the exception of Wyoming, had seen a decrease in state appropriations in recent years, New Mexico saw rising appropriations. Between 2001-02 and 2003-04, state appropriations rose 17.6%, from \$126.4 million to \$148.6 million. However, the impact of that appropriation increase was somewhat diluted by the fact that community college

full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments also rose by 13.2% between 2000 (28,848) and 2002 (32,657) (New Mexico Commission on Higher Education, 2003: 12).

State appropriations for the community colleges were protected by the fact that the recent economic recession did not much affect the resource rich state of New Mexico. Moreover, the legislature recently amended the community college subsidy formula to provide the same appropriations level for 100 and 200 level courses at community colleges as at the four-year institutions. However, for science courses, community colleges are funded at a lower level than are universities.

At the local level, New Mexico has inequalities between larger, more affluent counties which are able to contribute more towards local community colleges (e.g., Los Alamos) and poorer areas of New Mexico (e.g., the northern New Mexico counties). The difference in local appropriations affects the level of instruction and services that are delivered to students.

Enrollment Demands

Between 2001-02 and 2017-18, the number of public high school graduates in New Mexico is expected to decrease by 7 percent (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003). The Education Commission of the States has estimated that New Mexico has to increase its postsecondary enrollments by 65% (nearly 78 thousand more student) between 2000 and 2015 if it is to match the performance of the best-performing (“benchmark”) states (Education Commission of the States, 2003a).

In the following, we will look at state policies affecting the community college under three headings: access policies, success policies, and – because it is a category crossing both – performance accountability. We describe the policies in place, note assessments of their impact given us by our interviewees, and discuss proposals for new policies they suggested.

ACCESS POLICIES

What role does state policy play in encouraging greater access by minority and low-income students to New Mexico community colleges? We first look at whether the state government is committed to this goal and then examine specific state policies that can serve it.

Public Commitment to Student Access

The level of public commitment towards wide access to the community college access appears to be great in New Mexico. The 2003-04 Governor's Task Force on Higher Education, charged with setting a new direction for the higher education system in the state, declared:

The projected growth of New Mexico's college-aged population over this period [from 2000 to 2025]— 33.5% — will be the fourth highest in the United States. However, most of this growth will occur in groups that have traditionally not participated in higher education in proportion to their numbers in the state's population — especially Hispanics and Native Americans....The population with the greatest need for education in New Mexico — children living in poverty — is a larger share of the population than in all but two states: Mississippi and Louisiana. These children are the least likely to participate in higher education....Not only must New Mexico accommodate the inevitable increase in demand for higher education that this increased population will create, but we must simultaneously increase the rates of participation as well. (Governor's Task Force on Higher Education, 2004, p. viii)

Interestingly, the state's community college policies usually do not specifically target the minority and low-income populations.⁴ However, there is a great awareness of issues related to minority and low-income populations, given that New Mexico is both a majority minority state and a poor state.

Below we focus specifically on state policies pertaining to open door admissions, tuition, student aid, outreach to potential students, comprehensive curriculum, and convenient access.

Open Door Admissions

There is no state policy that mandates that community colleges have open door admissions. Rather, it is a matter of well established custom. As a highly placed community college observer put it, “I am sure when [New Mexico] established community colleges and the various statutes that govern community colleges, [open admission] was pretty much the national standard that was for community college and I am sure they adopted that standard. It is not written in statute that they should be open admission or anything like that; it was just assumed.”

The expectation is that institutions will admit all students who possess a high school diploma or GED. And if students do not have a GED, they can acquire one at the community college and then move into college-credit programs. In the 2002-2003 academic year, 2,832 adults completed a GED in New Mexico’s community colleges, a 41% increase from the previous year (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005).

Tuition

Current Policy

Tuition levels at New Mexico community colleges are exceptionally low. The average resident tuition and required fees for New Mexico community college students in 2005-06 were \$1,191, which was the second lowest in the nation (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 9).⁵ The estimated total net cost of attending a New Mexico community college (tuition, room, and board minus student aid) in 2004 represented on average 33% of the median family income of the bottom 40% of the population in income; this put New Mexico at much the same level as all the other first round Achieving the Dream states except Florida, which was higher (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 9, 13; idem, 2004b).

Keeping Down Tuition

Local community colleges set their own tuition rates, but they are subject to some state control. Two mechanisms have played a role. The Commission on Higher Education (supplanted by the Higher Education Department) had the power to deter large increases in tuition rates via the budget approval process. Each community college presented its proposed budget to the Commission. If a college proposed a large tuition increase, the institution could be taken to task and the budget rejected. In addition, the legislature influences tuition rates through its tuition credit system: that is, the tuition amount it expects community colleges to charge and that is deducted from their state appropriations. This year it was 4.5% and the year before it was 4%.

New Mexico state government does not have an explicit state policy directed toward keeping community college tuition rates low. However, perhaps because of the state influences above, the average tuition increase was 5% per year over 11 years.

Tuition Charged Undocumented Immigrants

In 2005, the legislature passed a new law (S582, ch. 348) allowing community colleges to charge undocumented immigrants instate tuition and allowing them access to state student aid. To qualify, students had to have attended a New Mexico high school for at least a year and either graduated from high school or received a high school equivalency degree in New Mexico (Baker, 2005; Khan, 2005).

Evaluations by Respondents

Though New Mexico has one of the lowest tuition rates in the US, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education in its *Measuring Up 2004* report gives New Mexico's higher education system a grade of "F" as it relates to affordability given the low median income in the state and its lack of sufficient need-based aid. The affordability category measures whether students and families can afford to pay for higher education, given income levels, financial aid, and the types of colleges and universities in the state (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 8).

Student Aid

Current Policy

In 2003-04, New Mexico disbursed \$67.7 million in student aid. None of this aid specifically targeted students of color, but some did target low-income students insofar as the aid was need-based. However, only about a third (30%) of the total state aid in 2003-04 was given in the form of need-based grants. This figure was among the lowest among the AtD states. Table A1 in the Appendix lists the various state student aid programs in 2004-05. Only one-fifth (\$12.6 million) of the state aid awards in that year went to students at the independent community colleges and university branch campuses (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005: 8; New Mexico Higher Education Department, 2005: 28-29).

Need-Based Aid

Although the state does not provide that much need-based aid, there are three need-based aid programs. The State Student Incentive Grant (SSIG) provides aid for undergraduate students with substantial financial need who are attending public or selected private non-profit postsecondary institutions in New Mexico. The awards vary from \$200 to \$2,500 per year. Part-

time students (minimum of six credit hours or as determined by the particular institution) are eligible for pro-rated awards (New Mexico Commission on Public Records, 2001a).

The Legislative Endowment Scholarships provide aid for undergraduate students with substantial financial need who are attending public postsecondary institutions in New Mexico. Two-year public institutions may award up to \$1,000 per student per year, while four-year public institutions may award up to \$2,500 per student per academic year. Part-time students (at least half-time) are eligible for pro-rated awards. To be eligible, students must be New Mexico residents, undergraduates attending public postsecondary institutions in New Mexico, and enrolled at least half-time. In addition, preference is given to returning adult students at two- and four-year public institutions and transfer students from two-year New Mexico public postsecondary institutions entering an eligible four-year institution (New Mexico Commission on Higher Education, 2002a,c).

The Education Works Program (EWP) is a cash assistance program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients attending higher education. Participation in the EWP is limited to 24 months, with limited provisions for extending the time limit. To be eligible, students must be enrolled full-time, not already have a degree, and make satisfactory progress as defined by the school (New Mexico Legislature, 2003a).

Merit-Based Aid

The Lottery Success Scholarship (LSS) is the largest state funded grants/scholarship opportunity available to all postsecondary students. It is funded from profits from the New Mexico Lottery. The LSS funds eight consecutive semesters of eligibility beginning with the second semester of college enrollment. No application is required. Qualification is based on meeting these requirements: New Mexico residency; graduation from a New Mexico high school or obtaining a New Mexico GED after May 1996; full-time enrollment (a minimum of 12 credit hours) at an eligible New Mexico public college or university in the first regular semester immediately following high school graduation; obtaining a GPA of at least 2.5 during the first college semester; and maintaining an overall GPA of at least 2.5 during the rest of the college career (New Mexico Lottery, 2004).

Aid for Special Populations

Part-Time Students. Low-income and minority students disproportionately attend part time. There are no state student aid funds directly targeted to such students. However, most of the state aid programs do allow students who attend half time (defined as 6 credits a semester) to be eligible.

Undocumented Immigrants. Certainly, most minority people are not undocumented immigrants and many of the latter are not minority people. But among Latinos especially, undocumented immigrants constitute an important group. The question is what provisions for student aid are made available for them. They certainly do not qualify for federal student aid. In 2005, the legislature passed a new law (S 582, ch. 348) allowing undocumented immigrants access to state student aid. They would have to have attended a New Mexico high school for at least a year and graduated or received a high school equivalency degree in New Mexico (Baker, 2005; Khan, 2005).

Adult Students. The state has a small program of child care for students with children. The funds come out of the student services appropriation.

Linking Aid to Tuition

There is no formal state policy. The state attempts to increase aid if tuition increases but this does not always occur.

Evaluations by Respondents

A number of our interviewees noted that need-based aid was insufficient in New Mexico, and this was echoed in the 2004 *Measuring Up* report of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2004a: 8).

Although the merit-based Lottery Success Scholarship is a great opportunity for students, there are two problems that interviewees cited: too short duration of scholarship monies for students and a focus on recent high school graduates. First, the Lottery Success Scholarship is available for only eight semesters. Therefore, should a student begin a postsecondary career in the remedial track, his or her Lottery Scholarship allocation could expire prior to completion of a degree. Second, students who do not enroll immediately after graduating or obtaining their GED are not eligible for the Lottery Success Scholarship, and, indeed, many low-income students do not start college their first semester out of high school. Finally, the Lottery Success Scholarship does not provide funds for the first semester. As a result, institutions have utilized state monies to institute Bridge Scholarships. They are institutional scholarships for the first semester in order to allow students to achieve a 2.5 GPA in the first semester and thus qualify for the Lottery Scholarship.

Policy Proposals from Respondents

The Governor's Task Force on Higher Education (2004) recommended a significant expansion of need-based aid: specifically, significantly expanding "the availability of need based financial aid by creation of a Student Trust Fund to create endowed scholarships based upon need criteria." The New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (2004b) endorsed the proposal

and pushed for creating a trust fund using funds from the increased oil and gas revenues the state was realizing. The 2005 College Affordability Act (H 778, S 669, ch. 193) created such a fund, but no funds were appropriated (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005: 4-5). The Governor's Task Force (2004) also recommended expanding eligibility to the Lottery Success Scholarship program by allowing "broader access for first-generation college students, working adults (especially single parents), and students with associate degrees returning to pursue baccalaureate degrees. Specific changes include a two-year wait-out period and a second chance to earn the scholarship by making a 2.5 Grade Point Average (GPA)." The Governor's Task Force (2004) also recommended allowing students at accredited tribal and private colleges to be eligible for state student aid. Again, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (2004b) endorsed this proposal and pushed for legislation. Several bills were introduced but none passed in 2005 (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005: 10). However, a memorial was passed requiring a task force to look at all these issues.

To encourage completion, the Governor's Task Force recommended increasing to five, from four, the number of semesters students remain eligible for aid while at a community college (Governor's Task Force on Higher Education, 2004b: 6, 13). Again, this proposal was endorsed by the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (2004b) but nothing came of it.

These proposals focus on traditional forms of student aid. But one of our interviewees, the head of a statewide social services organization focused on the needs of low-income students, commented on the importance of having more funds for childcare aid for adults with children:

My son and daughter-in-law got married very young and they have two kids. It's just really hard to convince them that they can go to school. The barrier is having children, if you don't have a place to put them....Now I have seen the Job Corps and at the Job Corps we have one of our early Head Start programs there so that the students that go to Job Corps put their kids in the Head Start program...If we could have more programs like that I think we would get more people that should really be there [in college], the ones that have kids....Because if there isn't any child care at the institution, then the students can't go to school because it's expensive to put a child in day care.

Outreach to Potential Students

Low-cost attendance and an open door are not enough to ensure proper access by minority and low-income students. Also important are efforts to reach into the high school, and even earlier, to interest potential students in the idea of going to college.

Current Policy

Early Outreach

There is no mandate from the state specifically for community college outreach to K-12 students. This activity is expected as part of the operating budgets received. The state runs a federally funded GEAR UP program. There is also a small ENLACE (Engaging Latino Communities for Education) program – funded by the state and by the Kellogg Foundation – for outreach activities to Hispanic students, with funds going to universities as well as community colleges.

Dual-Enrollment Programs

One popular way of reaching out to high school students is through dual-enrollment programs that allow students to take college level courses that receive both secondary and postsecondary credit (Education Commission of the States, 2005). New Mexico does not have a mandated dual enrollment program (Karp, Bailey, Hughes, & Fermin, 2004: 15, 39). However, state law does allow qualified high school students to take postsecondary courses for dual credit, usually on college campuses (Laws of 1990, chap. 25). All the community colleges have chosen to participate. A community college can count a dual-enrolled student as part of its enrollment for state funding purposes. At the same time, the K-12 school district the student is coming from can keep the full amount of state K-12 aid for that student. In about a third of the cases, the community college does not charge tuition for the dual enrollment students. When tuition is charged, about half the time it is paid by the high school and about half the time by the student (Education Commission on the States, 2000: 33; idem, 2005; Karp et al., 2005). New regulations allow students to take core high school courses credits as dual-credit courses.

Evaluations by Respondents

Some flaws in state dual-credit policy were identified in the 2003 Legislative session and continue to be a focus of policy discussion (Legislative Memorials HJM 79 and SJM 86). High schools have not always been paying their share of the tuition. Also, students who are interested in vocational education programs do not get adequate support or encouragement from their high school (e.g., a high school has the authority to deny a student from taking classes at the community college level if the high school feels that the student is “below” or “beyond” the skill level of community colleges).

Policy Proposals from Respondents

The Governor’s Task Force on Higher Education (2004b) recommended that the new Higher Education Department “create an improved dual credit and advanced placement system” (p. 9). Meanwhile, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (2004b) recommended that a

state-mandated dual credit system be established that would allow high school students greater access to postsecondary courses.

A local community college official recommended eliminating the policy that prohibits students from participating in dual-enrollment programs until they are high school juniors or obtain their GED. He argues that this policy overlooks a large number of dropouts and prohibits them from taking advantage of the dual-enrollment program:

We have 600 students who dropped out from the 9th to the 12th grade in [our] County alone. The policy statement right now is where are they going to go; what are they going to do? If they drop out, we'll say hey we are going to allow you to drop out. But wait a minute here is another alternative. Go to the community college and enroll. Let us count them for funding; let the public schools count them for funding. But right now the policy statement is you drop out, guess what, you can't enroll until you are a high school junior or equivalent and you have a GED. You have a whole population base out there that is doing what?

Comprehensive Curriculum

Many minority and low-income students are attracted into the community college not by college-level academic curricula but by other kinds of programs such as adult basic education (ABE). To what degree is the provision of such curricula subject to state support or guidance?

Current Policy

Occupational Education

The notion that community colleges should provide occupational education came later to New Mexico than other states. But in recent years the state has been pushing its community colleges in this direction. In 2003, it created a Work Force Skills Development Fund (HB 394, N.M. Stat. 21-13A-6) to provide matching grants to community colleges for the development, expansion, and support of high-skills entry-level training programs (New Mexico Legislature, 2003b).

Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language

About three-quarters of adult basic education (ABE) and ESL services are delivered through the community colleges. The state funds ABE – about \$5.45 million – by formula to all the community colleges, tribal two-year colleges, one university with a community college division, and one school district. The state also funds the Coalition for Literacy and most colleges partner with it for additional literacy services. In 2003, supervision of ABE was moved by SB 691 from the Department of Public Education to the Higher Education Department.

Welfare to Work

Part of the state funding for ABE/ESL goes to TANF (welfare to work) clients.

Convenient Access

Especially for working adults, access to the community college is greatly aided if community colleges reach out through nontraditional schedules, dispersed locations, and distance education.

There are no state policies that require or reward community colleges to offer evening and weekend classes, satellite facilities, or distance education. Colleges do, however, receive the same amount of state formula aid for students enrolled in distance education courses as in regular on-campus courses (Education Commission of the States, 2000: 42). The New Mexico Virtual College – a new venture – was appropriated \$475,000 in 2005. It is nonrecurring money and will be used to build student support for the virtual college.⁶

SUCCESS POLICIES

Public Commitment to Student Success

One of the most visible forms of public commitment toward equal outcomes in New Mexico involved the Governor's Task Force on Higher Education (2004). The Governor's charges to the Task Force included the following: "It is imperative that the State of New Mexico address its Citizens' grave concerns regarding low completion rates of students entering the two and four year college programs" (Governor's Task Force on Higher Education, 2004, p. ii).

One of the Task Force's five subcommittees focused on student success,⁷ addressing such issues as instituting a P-20 system, facilitating dual enrollment, expanding need-based student aid, smoothing the transfer process, and installing an outcomes oriented accountability system (Governor's Task Force on Higher Education, 2004: 12-14).

However, as with access policy, New Mexico has not implemented policies specifically geared towards success of its minority and low-income populations. The perception seems to be that – with minority and low-income students being a majority in New Mexico – policies automatically will consider them and they do not need to be singled out for special treatment. As a community college president put it, “minorities and low-income students are such a majority here that any policies automatically include their consideration. But they are not singled out for special treatment in policies.”

Below we examine the following state policies affecting success in the community college: remediation, academic guidance and support, non-academic guidance and support, transfer advising and support, baccalaureate provision, noncredit to credit articulation, and workforce and economic development.

Remediation

Many minority and low-income students enter community college inadequately prepared to do college-level study. They therefore need remedial education. What does the state do to make sure such remediation is provided effectively? Certainly, the state supports remediation through funding, but – unlike most of the other AtD states – it provides little guidance after that.

Current Policy

Below we examine several different features of remediation policy: financing, testing upon entry to college, assignment to remediation, opportunity to take non-remedial courses, student eligibility for financial aid, content of remediation, exiting from remediation, and reducing need for remediation.

We find that New Mexico has legislated much less policy to govern remediation than the other Achieving the Dream states, particularly in comparison with Florida.

Financing

Community college remedial education is eligible for funding through the higher education funding formula (Education Commission of the States, 2000: 37-38; Jenkins & Boswell, 2002: 3). The total state appropriation for remedial education in 2004-05 was approximately \$19.6 million (\$113.73 per semester credit hour). Moreover, unlike several other states, New Mexico does not set a limit on how many remedial courses a student can take and still have those courses be state subsidized.

Testing upon Entry

All the colleges have some mechanism for remedial assessment for all students, but there are no state level requirements or guidelines that determine whether that assessment is mandatory or what form it takes. The state permits institutions to make up their policies with regard to whether there is mandatory entry level testing, what exams are used, and what cut-off scores determine whether a student is in need of remediation. In fact, some colleges use Accuplacer and some Compass, and the cut-off scores vary considerably even when they are using the same exam. In 2005, legislation (HB 136) was introduced, but failed, to mandate the standardization of higher education placement tests. However, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges is working to have the colleges discuss what standardization should occur (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002: 3; New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005: 9).

Assignment to Remediation

The state permits institutions to decide whether students who fail the placement exam must take remediation (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002: 3).

Opportunity to Take Non-Remedial Courses

Whether students receiving remediation can take non-remedial courses in other subjects is left up to the discretion of the colleges.

Student Eligibility for Financial Aid

Remedial students are eligible for state student aid if remedial education is offered for credit and they otherwise meet the criteria of the aid programs (Jenkins and Boswell, 2002: 3). Because of the requirement that remediation be for credit, students are not eligible for state aid if they are taking adult basic education courses.

Institutional Sources of Remediation

Four-year colleges are not excluded from offering remediation but they do not receive state funding for it.

Content of Remediation

The content of remediation is left to the individual colleges.

Exiting Remediation

The state permits institutions to decide when students can leave remediation (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002: 3).

Reducing the Need for Remediation

There is an emerging state policy with regard to whether community colleges should work with high schools to reduce the remediation needs of students at entry to the community college. HB 186 and SB 62 (2003) require the State Public Education Department (successor to the State Department of Education) to work with the new Higher Education Department (successor to the Commission on Higher Education) to align high school curricula and end-of-course tests with the placement tests administered by two- and four-year public institutions (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005).

Policy Proposals from Respondents

An effort was made in the 2005 Legislature (HB 136) to mandate that community colleges meet to see if there could be, first, better alignment among the community colleges and universities in the cut-off scores used and the courses students were placed in and, secondly, better alignment with the high school exit exam. This effort had the support of the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (NMACC), but the NMACC eventually opposed the bill, when an amendment was put in to move to one mandatory statewide test That was opposed by its member colleges. However, the NMACC continues to pursue this alignment effort without legislation, working with the community colleges and the three open admissions regional universities. The NMACC will eventually also work on alignment between the college placement exam and the high school exit exam.

Though several community colleges would oppose having a mandatory statewide test, one of the local community college officials we interviewed recommended that the state develop a mandatory state-wide testing system between the high school and community college level that is more compatible to the needs of both levels. This official argued that policies could be written so that all state institutions would utilize the same testing system and that this would create both a cost saving and consistency in reporting.

Academic Guidance and Counseling

Community colleges receive state funds for academic guidance and counseling service as a part of their regular formula-based student service appropriation (\$344.21 per headcount to provide a scope of programs considered as student services). However, there is no amount specifically earmarked for academic counseling and guidance, and there are no state regulations guiding the form in which it is provided. As a result, each institution is free to decide the scope and content of its guidance and counseling services within available resources.

Nonacademic Guidance and Support

Like its academic twin, nonacademic guidance and counseling, such as career and personal counseling, is not supported by specific funding but rather included in the general state support for student services. However, the state does allocate \$40 per week to students who have children, with the intention of its being utilized for child care services. This money is delivered via the state financial aid package and is equal to the cost of low cost child care that is provided by Youth Development Incorporated (YDI) on many community college campuses.

Community college staffers who provide non-academic counseling are required to be licensed under the New Mexico Counseling and Therapy Practice Act of 1997 and the Act provides some guidelines for practice. However, other than this Act, there are no state regulations governing the form and content of nonacademic guidance and counseling.

Transfer Assistance

Current Policy

Student Aid

There is no state aid program specifically targeted to transfer students.

Transfer Advising

There is no specific funding set aside specifically for transfer advising and articulation. It is supported within the total funding amount provided for student services. Moreover, there are no state rules regulating the form that it takes.

There does not appear to be any state-sponsored transfer advisory webpage, etc.

Transfer of Academic Associate Degrees

There are no provisions for guaranteeing that students who graduate with an academic associate degree will be accepted by a public university with junior status.

Occupational Education Transfer

Community college/four-year college course equivalencies have been established in early childhood education and a transfer compact is being proposed for elementary teacher education. Attempts are also being made in nursing education but have yet to be accomplished. Under new legislation approved in 2005 (SB 161, chap 272), the approved transfer modules are to be transferred as a “block” (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005: 9).

General Education Transfer

The 1995 Postsecondary Education Articulation Act (NM Stat. Ann.1978, 21-1B) required the development of a 35-credit general education core. Rules were issued by the Commission on Higher Education in relation to this legislation (5 NMAC 55.3), and the core module was posted on the CHE website (Education Commission of the States, 2001: 11-12).

Under new legislation approved in 2005 (SB 161, chap 272), the general education core is to be transferred as a “block.” This legislation was pushed by the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges because universities had been accepting only some courses and not the entire block because of slight differences in the eyes of the NMACC between the community college and university courses (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005: 9).⁸

Specific Major Modules

The 1995 Postsecondary Education Articulation Act (NM Stat. Ann.1978, 21-1B) required the development of 64-credit transfer modules. The transfer modules were posted on the CHE website (Education Commission of the States, 2001: 11-12). Community college/four-year college course equivalencies have been established in early childhood education and a transfer compact is being proposed for elementary teacher education. Attempts are also being made in nursing education but have yet to be accomplished. Under new legislation approved in 2005 (SB 161, chap 272), the approved transfer modules are to be transferred as a “block” (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005, p. 9).

Common Course Numbering

Legislation passed in 2005 (SB 161, chap 272) requires that a common course numbering and naming system be established for all lower division courses that are substantially equivalent. Faculty groups have been meeting by discipline to develop common course numbering and naming and to establish competencies for general education (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005: 9).

Baccalaureate Provision

Universities have moved to provide upper-division instruction at community colleges, with the number of upper division programs on community college campuses doubling over a three-year period (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004a: 57-58). This shift stemmed from a Higher Education Department regulatory change five years ago that put distance education funding on the same level as on-campus and service area instruction. Moreover, service area restrictions were removed. As a community college official notes,

Prior to about five years ago, distance education was not funded at the same level as on-campus [education], and service areas even for universities were defined, so it was a disincentive to deliver outside your service area. The laws were changed to fully fund all delivery of distance education and service area restrictions were removed from universities to an open-market. These two changes as well as demands from rural communities led to more upper division instruction by our universities at community colleges...So, without explicitly saying so, the distance education rule has encouraged this behavior.

Only one community college – Northern New Mexico Community College – has been given the right to offer a baccalaureate degree on the strength of its constitutional status to provide teacher education and some demonstrated needs analyses. In 2005, legislation was passed (H 461, S 594, ch. 308) that removed restrictions on NNMCC offering baccalaureate degrees and allowing it to change its name to Northern New Mexico College. All other community colleges are statutory in status and not affected by this change. A leading community college observer thinks it is unlikely that the other colleges would get support for permission to offer the baccalaureate degree (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2005; Salazar, 2005).

Noncredit to Credit Articulation

Many minority and low-income students enter the community college through noncredit programs, whether through adult basic education, English as a second language, or contract training. But to realize maximum benefit from their community college education, such students need to be assisted in moving from noncredit training to credit training that can lead to a degree.

The State of New Mexico does not provide funding or other policy guidance to assist this movement (Council for Advancement of Adult Learning, 2004: 20).

Workforce and Economic Development

New Mexico has been slower than some other Achieving the Dream states to develop a strong state policy shaping the community college role in economic development. However, that is changing. The state Workforce Training Act (WTA) of 2003 (HB 160, N.M. Stat. 21-13A-1-5) authorizes the delivery of customized, non-credit training through community colleges for members of the workforce who require specialized training to obtain or advance in employment with small and large businesses. WTA requires community colleges seeking funding to provide training for at least one business during the first year of implementation, adding at least one more business each succeeding year or increasing the number of employees served (New Mexico Legislature, 2003c). HB 394 also passed in 2003 creates the Work Force Skills Development Fund to provide matching funds to community colleges for the development, expansion, and support of broad-based entry-level high-skills training programs (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005). Finally, in 2005, legislation was passed (HB 98; chap. 111) that created a new office of Workforce Training and Development and articulated a strong role for community colleges in workforce preparation and economic development.

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

In New Mexico, state government is making a major push for greater higher education accountability. In his charge to the Task Force on Higher Education, Governor Bill Richardson held that “the Citizens of New Mexico demand a valid system of performance measurement and accountability for the States’ two- and four-year public colleges and universities.” And the Task Force’s report in turn declared: “Accountability is now an essential part of our state education policy....Higher education cannot continue to receive public funds without accounting for how those dollars are spent and the value they add to New Mexico and to its citizens” (Governor’s Task Force on Higher Education, 2004, pp. ii, 3).

Current Policy

Performance Indicators

If performance accountability is to lead to improving access to, and success in, community colleges for minority and low-income students, then the right indicators must be present. The indicators collected by the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges and by the now defunct New Mexico Commission on Higher Education are discussed below.⁹ All these indicators are listed in Appendix Table A2 below.

Access Indicators

Racial composition of entrants (New Mexico Higher Education Department, 2005; New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004a).

Success Indicators

Retention to spring of the first year and retention to fall of the second year: The first measure – reported by the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (2004a) – has as its denominator the number of first-time, full-time, degree seeking students. This measure is not ideal because it only applies to perhaps 5% of community college students, but it allows comparison with other states. This meant giving up the previous measure of students who have earned at least nine credits. However, the state may be able to move to a better measure as the current state data effort – involving the 10 states participating in Achieving the Dream and Bridges to Opportunity initiatives – matures. The institutional researchers group of the NMACC is discussing breaking down this retention measure by race/ethnicity and income (defined as Pell grant eligibility versus not). The second retention measure was collected by the Commission on Higher Education (2004a). Both retention measures are reported for the two-year colleges as a whole and are not broken down by individual college or by student background characteristics such as race and income.

Course completion: This measures the percentage completed of courses attempted, in general and by type of course: academic, vocational, and remedial (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004a). The institutional researchers group of the NMACC is talking about breaking down this measure by race/ethnicity and income (as defined by a student's eligibility for a Pell grant).

Graduation (degree and certificate): The New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (2004a) reports the number of graduates broken down by race for the two-year colleges as a whole. The figures are not publicly reported broken down by community college.

Time to degree: The percent of full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students who complete a degree/certificate in 150% of allotted time. These figures are reported for the two-year colleges

as a whole and are not broken down by individual community college or by student characteristics (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004a).

Total rate of success: The New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (2004a) reports a measure of the proportion – among a cohort of new students intending to transfer or obtain a degree – who meet any one of five conditions within three years after college entrance: received a degree or certificate; transferred; became transfer ready (defined as completing with a "C" or better, 18 credits or more of the general education core); or are still enrolled. The figures are reported broken down by individual community college and by student race.

Transfer: The Commission on Higher Education (2000, 2002b) used to report the gross number of students transferring from two-year institutions to research and regional universities in New Mexico. However, these figures were not reported broken down by community college or student characteristics such as race and income.

Job placement and continuing education: The state collects this information using Unemployment Insurance information. This measure is mandated by the Accountability in Government Act. The figures are reported for both all graduates and for workforce education graduates specifically. The figures are broken down by individual college and by student race (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004a).

Job retention: This is a Perkins measure. It is the percentage – among vocational graduates placed in jobs – who were retained in a job six months after placement. This figure is for the two-year colleges as a whole and is not reported broken down by individual community college or student background (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004a).

Passage of licensure exams: This measure consists of the percentage of students in a discipline requiring external certification or licensure who pass a licensure or certification exam. It is disaggregated by community college but not by student race or income (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004a).

Community college contribution to workforce and economic development: Several different measures are collected: number of firms served through contract or tuition agreements; numbers enrolled in workforce development/continuing education courses; jobs created or retained; and community partnerships entered. These measures are reported for individual community colleges (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004a).

Data Collection

New Mexico does not yet have an information system that integrates data from the community colleges with data from the K-12 system and the four-year colleges. However, steps are being taken toward establishing such a data warehouse.

Connection of Performance Measures to State Funding

A Performance Incentive Fund was established in 2003 and the Commission on Higher Education was directed to develop performance measures and standards (HB 393, SB 369 of the 2003 Legislative Session). However, the Legislature has yet to vote funds for the incentive formula. An effort was made in 2005 to allocate \$7 million for this purpose but it was not passed.

One reason may be that there is still not complete agreement on the distribution plan. The Higher Education Department had recommended that community colleges be rewarded on the basis of community college performance with respect to Pell eligible students. The funding was to be new funding for the first two years and then 3-6% of base funding in the third year. However, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges was not entirely happy with some of the measures proposed and the colleges were pretty opposed to having the performance funding apply to base funding rather than new funding. In addition, legislators were not familiar with performance funding and preferred to apply surplus state funds to clear projects for which they could take credit.

The Legislative Budget Committee set up a Performance Review Subcommittee that in 2005 held hearings on the state's retention measures.

Evaluations by Respondents

Use by State Officials to Craft State Policy

There is no evidence that the state government has used outcomes data collected by the community colleges to inform and modify state policies affecting access to and success in the community college, particularly for minority and low-income students. As a high level community college official noted, "These data are collected and shared with stakeholders but have not necessarily been used by state government to develop state access policies."

Use by the Community Colleges

The community colleges are now beginning to make moderate use of the outcome data. As a well-placed community college observer notes,

They [community colleges] are beginning to use the results as measures. Targets and benchmarks are being required, put in the budget document passed by the legislature each year and now being reviewed by a legislative review committee. One such review is taking place this Thursday looking at retention results which are now reported on twice per year – fall to spring and fall to fall. Prior to this, I would have said minimal use and now I would guess moderate use. An example that I've heard feedback about is a measure to review programs to demonstrate that the percentage of stable or improving enrolled programs increases annually over declining programs. It was reported that this has enhanced their program review process.

There is no state financing for improvement of the data collection and analysis capacity of individual community colleges, and this lack has made it difficult for colleges. As a state community leader notes, "There have not been set aside resources to bolster data collection and research capabilities at our institutions. Some of our institutions are very, very small so they struggle. Every time I get them together and say okay we are going to do this, this and this I get so many moans."

The New Mexico Association of Community Colleges will be hiring a research and data coordinator to build up its capacity in data analysis. The Association has also been convening the institutional researchers at community colleges to discuss how to disaggregate outcomes data by race and income (Renz, 2004).

Policy Proposals

The Governor's Task Force on Higher Education (2004) recommended establishing "accountability measures with regard to persistence and completion rates at each institution, including measures for underrepresented and/or under performing student populations," as well as "accountability measures related to the articulation of two-year and four-year institutions and programs, including the percentage of community college transfer students enrolled at each of New Mexico's public universities, the academic achievement of transfer students compared to students already enrolled in institutions, the program completion rates of transfer students compared to students already enrolled, and percentage of transfer students placed in jobs or continuing their education" (Governor's Task Force on Higher Education, 2004, p. 3).

The New Mexico Association of Community Colleges recommended the development of such performance measures as transition of GED students to college, attainment of industry certificates, success rates of students who transfer to four-year institutions, increased wages for those who complete programs or courses, and student accomplishment of their intents. It has also

recommended that community college leaders should be involved in the development of these measures (New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2004b).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

New Mexico has one of the more distinctive profiles among the first-round Achieving the Dream states. For one, it is a leader – along with Texas – in extending state higher education benefits to undocumented students in the form of state guaranteed access to community colleges, instate tuition, and eligibility for state financial aid. On the other hand, the state has been the least active in state policymaking for community colleges, although this has been changing rapidly in the last few years as the community college system has grown and the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges has assumed a major coordinating and leadership role.

Prime areas in which the state should consider further policymaking efforts are need-based aid, student outreach, remediation, guidance and counseling, transfer, and noncredit to credit movement.

As many observers have noted, New Mexico devotes only a small share of its student aid funds to need-based grants (30%, one of the lowest among the Achieving the Dream states). Even to meet the national average, it would need to double this figure. The state may also wish to create a program of aid specifically for part-time students since so many of them attend community colleges.

Moreover, the state has very little in the form of early intervention programs to encourage students to consider entering higher education. The ENLACE program is very worthwhile, but it is privately funded and the state needs to step in with a sizable commitment of its own funds.

Unlike the other first-round Achieving the Dream states, New Mexico has very little regulation of community college remediation efforts. It may wish to consider making remedial assessment mandatory and specifying the tests and cutoff scores to be used, so as to avoid inconsistencies among the community colleges. It is making commendable efforts to reach consensus on the latter among the community colleges but, once achieved, that consensus would benefit from being enshrined in state policy.

Like other AtD states, New Mexico needs to consider providing dedicated state funding and standards for academic, non-academic, and transfer counseling. It is clear that good counseling – especially if it does not entail preconceived ideas of what jobs less advantaged students are destined for – can play an important role in expanding opportunity. Yet the lack of specific funding and state standards for counseling and guidance leaves it at the mercy of the ups and downs of community college funding and the belief that counseling can be cut back or done on the cheap when other demands are heard.

Besides funds and standards for transfer guidance and counseling (see above), one other area where New Mexico could usefully improve its transfer policies is to provide student aid specifically targeted to transfer students, since their needs are different from those of students just entering college.

New Mexico is also like the other AtD states in that it does very little at the state level to facilitate student movement from noncredit to credit programs. Yet, this is particularly important for minority and low-income students who often enter the community college through the noncredit side. Hence, the state may wish to consider how to provide state policy support for noncredit to credit transition.

Finally, though New Mexico collects a wide range of performance measures, it may wish to consider adding one for success in remediation and one for post-transfer success. With regard to the second, the state could follow Florida and North Carolina in measuring how many transfer students (especially those who secured an associate's degree at the community college) achieve a certain GPA (whether a 2.0 or 2.5) after a certain period at university. In addition, the state should consider aiding the commendable efforts of the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges to build up the institutional research capacities of the colleges. The state should consider providing funds to allow colleges to hire full-time institutional researchers and to allow the NMACC to provide those researchers with extensive training and technical assistance.

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ENDNOTES

¹ We wish to thank all those whom we interviewed to find out about state community college policy in New Mexico. We also wish to thank Frank Renz of the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, Katherine Hughes of the Community College Research Center, and Lara Couturier of Brown University for their careful review of and thoughtful comments on this chapter. Needless to say, all errors of omission and commission are our own.

² In addition, there are three tribally-controlled colleges and a special school (New Mexico Military Academy) that operates a high school as well as offering two years of college.

³ The Commission consisted of 15 members, 13 appointed by the governor to six-year terms and two student members also appointed by the governor to serve one-year terms. The commission had statutory responsibility for planning and coordination for all sectors of postsecondary education (Education Commission of the States, 2003). The Commission also had the authority by statute to “receive, adjust, and approve” the operating budgets of postsecondary institutions before they are submitted to the state Department of Finance and Administration. The CHE also made recommendations to the Legislature for capital building projects (Renz, 1999: 304).

⁴ Only one community college access or success policy seems to specifically address a minority group: American Indians. The Indian Education Act (Senate Bill 115) aims to ensure equitable and culturally relevant educational opportunities for American Indian students. It establishes: (1) an Indian Education Division within the state Department of Education; (2) an Indian Education Advisory Council consisting of one American Indian educator from each tribe in the state to advise the Indian Education Division; (3) an Indian Education Fund with initial funding of \$3.5 million to support improvements in Native American education, and (4) a requirement that the Indian Education Division prepare an annual statewide American Indian education status report that includes various indicators (e.g., attendance, dropout rate, parent and community involvement, and student achievement as measured by a statewide test) (The Rural School and Community Trust, 2004).

⁵ The estimated average nonresident tuition and required fees in 2005-06 were \$2,989 (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 10).

⁶ The goal of the New Mexico Virtual College (NMVC) is “to organize and facilitate collaboration and resource sharing between New Mexico Higher Education Institutions in the delivery of Distance Learning....allowing for the pooling of resources in order to maximize available dollars while getting full degree programs online in an as expeditious manner as possible” (New Mexico Virtual College, 2005a, p.1). “Support for a robust NMVC has been very limited by participating colleges. Currently, the NMVC is charged with developing a website to be used as a marketing tool and to include an online course catalog depicting online courses offered by all NM colleges.” It was placed online in the summer of 2003 (New Mexico Virtual College, 2005a, b).

⁷ The other four subcommittees were concerned with accountability, finance, governance, and workforce development.

⁸ Bowes (1997) notes that course articulation had been a “highly visible problem for the state” for many years (p. 115). Although there was a statewide common core of general education courses, a number of community college officials indicated that in practice the policy had not been very successful. For example, four-year institutions might accept the credit hours but would refuse to accept the credits towards major/academic program requirements.

⁹ The Commission on Higher Education measures are reported in the expectation that some or all will be continued by its successor, the Higher Education Department.

APPENDIX TABLE A1

New Mexico Financial Aid Programs (2004-2005)

| Program | Number of Recipients | Amount |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Need Based Grants | | |
| Student Incentive Grant | 14,956 | \$11,824,870 |
| Legislative Endowment | 239 | \$253,622 |
| Non-Need-Based Grants | | |
| Lottery Success Scholarship | 15,704 | \$28,311,605 |
| 3% Scholarship Program | 8,524 | \$6,459,655 |
| Athletic Scholarships | 1,594 | \$6,613,441 |
| Competitive Scholarship | 1,734 | \$2,574,854 |
| New Mexico Scholars Program | 292 | \$1,183,760 |
| Student Choice Scholarships | 502 | \$1,056,273 |
| Child Care Grants | 0 | \$0 |
| Vietnam Veterans Scholarships | 19 | \$27,811 |
| Work-Service Related Programs | | |
| State Work-Study | 5,667 | \$6,477,070 |
| Graduate Student Scholarships | 120 | \$597,518 |
| Loan Programs | | |
| WICHE Loans | 73 | \$1,412,366 |
| Teachers' Loans | 67 | \$235,259 |
| Nursing Loans | 64 | \$387,112 |
| Medical Loans | 5 | \$60,000 |
| Minority Doctoral Loans | 7 | \$105,000 |
| Allied Health Loans | 19 | \$168,750 |
| Osteopathic Medical Loans | 0 | \$0 |
| Total | 49,500 | \$67,707,466 |

Source: New Mexico Higher Education Department (2005: 29)

APPENDIX TABLE A2

New Mexico Outcomes Data

| Measures | Reported to Public | | |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|--------|
| | By CC | By Race | By SES |
| ACCESS MEASURES | | | |
| Enrollment: Gross/Percent | HED | HED, NMAACC* | |
| Enrollment of Adult Basic Education students (12 instructional hours or more) | NMAACC* | NMAACC* | |
| Enrollment in community college dual-credit programs | NMAACC | | |
| Enrollment in remedial courses | NMAACC | | |
| SUCCESS MEASURES | | | |
| Retention from fall to spring: full-time, first-time, degree seeking students | NMAACC* | | |
| Retention from fall to fall | CHE* | | |
| Course completion (C or better): Academic, career, and remedial courses | NMAACC | | |
| Success in College Math and English (separate breakdown for those enrolled in remedial and non-remedial level courses) | NMAACC | | |
| Graduation: Certificates and associate degrees awarded | | NMAACC* | |
| Graduation: Among vocational concentrators, % completing degree or credential within 3 years (Perkins measure) | NMAACC | | |
| Time to degree: The percent of full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students who complete a degree/certificate in 150% of allotted time. | NMAACC* | | |
| Total rate success: Of a cohort of new students intending to obtain a degree or transfer, % who three years after college entrance received a degree or certificate, transferred, became transfer ready (defined as completing with a "C" or better, 18 credits or more of the general education core), or are still enrolled. | NMAACC | NMAACC* | |
| Transfer: Gross number of students transferring from two-year institution to research and regional universities in New Mexico | CHE* | | |
| Job Placement: % of graduates and those completing 45 or more hours of their program who within one year after leaving community college were placed in jobs or were pursuing further education (general and Perkins measure) | NMAACC | NMAACC* | |

| Measures | Reported to Public | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|--------|
| | By CC | By Race | By SES |
| Job Retention: Of total number of vocational graduates placed in jobs, % who were retained in job 6 months after placement (Perkins measure) | NMACC* | | |
| Licensure exam passage rate: % of students in a discipline requiring external certification or licensure who pass licensure or certification exam | NMACC | | |
| Workforce development/contract training: number of firms served through contract or tuition agreements; numbers enrolled in workforce development/continuing education courses; jobs created or retained; and community partnerships entered. | NMACC | | |
| Change in wages due to community college enrollment | NMACC | | |
| Change in poverty level due to community college enrollment | NMACC* | | |

Notes:

* Indicates that data are available only for the two-year colleges as a whole and are not broken down by individual colleges.

Sources:

- * New Mexico Commission on Higher Education (2000, 2002b, 2003, 2004a)
- * New Mexico Higher Education Department (2005)
- * New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (2003a,b; 2004a; 2005)

CHAPTER FOUR

NORTH CAROLINA¹

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) is a comprehensive system with 58 campuses spread across North Carolina's 100 counties. More so than in many other states, the North Carolina Community College System was created as a major economic development engine and a backbone of the state's economic and workforce development (Liebowitz, Haynes, & Milley, 2001). The stated missions of the North Carolina Community College System include providing: (1) education, training, and retraining for the workforce, including basic skills and literacy education, and occupational and pre-baccalaureate programs; (2) support for economic development through services to, and in partnership with, business and industry; and (3) services to communities and individuals which improve the quality of life (North Carolina Community College System, 2005a). However, for a number of years, the community college system has been moving toward a more comprehensive mission of the community college. This shift includes opening up opportunities for transferring to four-year colleges to pursue the baccalaureate.

In what follows, we first set the stage by describing the state context: the size and composition of the state population, the nature of the state's economy, the structure of the community college system, and the governance and finance of the community college system. We then describe the state's policies affecting access to and success in the community college for minority and low-income students. As part of this discussion we address the state's provisions for performance accountability since they have clear relevance both to state policy and to the aim of the Achieving the Dream (AtD) initiative to use the analysis of data as the main lever to improve community college efforts and state policies to improve student access and success. As we go along, we note any evaluations our interviewees made of those policies and any policy proposals they offered.

This report is the product of intensive interviews and analysis of documents. We interviewed officials of the North Carolina Community College System, state legislators and staff, gubernatorial advisors, top officials of three community colleges, and heads of local community based organizations representing African Americans, Latinos, and low-income people. The community colleges represented different types – urban, suburban, and small town – located in different parts of the state. The documents analyzed included materials issued by North Carolina state agencies and by external organizations such as the Education Commission of the States and the Southern Regional Education Board.

THE STATE CONTEXT

Population Size and Composition

Approximately 8.4 million people resided in North Carolina in 2003, making the state the eleventh most populous in the nation. In that year, 74% of the population racially identified itself as white; 22% as Black/African American; 2% as Asian or Pacific Islander; 1% as American Indian; and 1% as of two or more races. Meanwhile, 6% identified ethnically as Hispanic or Latino; these individuals can be of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005: 24). Though the Latino population is still rather small, it is rapidly growing (Parker, 2004: 9-10).

Between 2001-02 and 2013-14, the composition of public high school graduates in North Carolina is expected to change considerably. While the income distribution of the graduates will not change much, the racial-ethnic composition will. The minority share of high-school graduates is projected to rise from 32 percent in 2001-02 to 52 percent in 2013-14, with Hispanics accounting for almost all of this increase (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003).

Economic Structure

The state's economy has been undergoing major changes as it loses its manufacturing base to both international competition and firms moving their manufacturing operations abroad. The state's gross state product in 2004 was \$335.4 billion, twelfth largest in the nation. However, the state per capita personal income in 2004 was only 37th in the nation, at \$29,246 in 2004. And the state's poverty rate averaged 15% over the years 2002-2003, substantially above the national average of 12.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2005a, b).

Nature of the Community College System

The 58 public community colleges in North Carolina maintain 155 "dedicated" facilities – eligible for state funding – in 92 of 100 counties. Besides the main campuses, there are also off-campus centers that provide noncredit courses (e.g., basic skills, contract training) and multi-campus sites that allow students to pursue a full four-year degree. As such, there is a North Carolina community college or extension center within 30 miles of every citizen in the state (Lancaster, 1999: 327; North Carolina Community College System, 2003b).

The public community colleges collectively enrolled 779,228 students in 2003-04 in credit and noncredit courses, with two thirds (67%) in noncredit courses. The community colleges accounted for 48% of total credit enrollments in North Carolina institutions of higher education in 2001. About two thirds (65%) of all enrollments come from white students, 24% from African Americans, 6% from Latinos, and the remainder are from other nonwhite groups (National

Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 13; North Carolina Community College System, 2005f: 62, 76, 78).).

Governance and Finance

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) serves as an administrative arm of and a resource agency for the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System. The members of the board are appointed by the Governor, House, and Senate. The Lt. Governor and the state Treasurer serve as ex-officio members.

Besides coordinating the state community college system, the board also meets annually or as needed with the North Carolina State Board of Education (K-12) and the board of governors of the University of North Carolina to discuss educational matters of mutual interest and to recommend to the General Assembly policies to improve public education at every level in the state.

The colleges have local boards with members appointed by the governor, the county board of commissioners, and local school boards.

In 2003-04, the state's community colleges derived 67% of their funds from the state government, 13% from local sources, 3% from the federal government, 16% from tuition and fees, and 0.4% from other sources. The local funds are used for building operations, maintenance, etc. (North Carolina Community College System, 2004a: 10).

In recent years FTE levels have increased in North Carolina due to high unemployment rates. But for the most part, the legislature has not had sufficient funds to finance that FTE growth. In response, the General Assembly has manipulated the funding formula by cutting the amount per FTE that institutions received. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that the General Assembly allocates funds based on the previous year's FTE levels and not on the institutions' current FTE numbers. This practice poses challenges for colleges with rapidly growing enrollments.

After declining appropriations between 2001 and 2004, community colleges received a 10% increase in 2004-05. This same fiscal year also brought House Bill 1771 which appropriated \$2 million to create a contingency reserve fund to help compensate for enrollment increases within the system. Community colleges that experienced full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment increases greater than 10% in fall 2004 would receive an increased allotment for the spring semester equal to the amount of enrollment growth that exceeded 10% (North Carolina General Assembly, 2005b).

But even with the recent increase in appropriations, limited funding was mentioned as the single policy that has most affected community colleges. As a community college president put it, "we've been trying to make the public understand, 'you can't keep doing more with less'...if we don't get full enrollment funding, we can't hire the same number of teachers, we can't offer the same number of sections." Another local community college official added: "Some of the more conservative elements in our state would say we don't have a revenue problem, we have a

spending problem...we don't need to raise taxes, we need to lower taxes and we need to cut back on some of the places we spend rather than get additional revenues for additional services in education."

Enrollment Demands

Between 2001-02 and 2017-18, the number of public high school graduates is expected to increase by 31 percent (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003). Furthermore, the Education Commission of the States has estimated that North Carolina has to increase its postsecondary enrollments by 72% (nearly 330 thousand more student) between 2000 and 2015 if it is to match the performance of the best-performing ("benchmark") states (Education Commission of the States, 2003).

ACCESS POLICIES

Public Commitment to Student Access

Several observers perceive access to be perhaps the most positive aspect of the North Carolina Community College System, pointing to its open door admissions policy and low tuition rates. A local community college official stated a common refrain: "we have always had a commitment to access for all students." And the general reaction is that this commitment has resulted in a genuine openness. A local community college official noted: "we really feature access in North Carolina...I can't think of anything offhand at the state level that inhibits access...I don't think that access is a huge problem in our state. I think that we are accessible."

Although there seems to be a strong commitment to access in North Carolina's community colleges, this commitment is focused on access generally rather than on access for minority and low-income populations specifically. A local community college leader notes:

I don't know that we've focused specifically on minority and low-income populations in our state. I think that we've done more – we paint things with a broad brush so there are performance measures that the General Assembly has mandated that we pursue, but the results aren't disaggregated by minority or low-income students. I think that we, at least to date, the General Assembly has just asked us to work toward overall success for all students.

However, there are some exceptions. The state community college system has been concerned about access for Latino students. Top officials have noted their concern about addressing the needs of Latino students and the state system has launched a Hispanic Initiative "designed to

increase the number of employment training programs available to Hispanic students and to establish linkages with community programs that provide benefits beyond the community colleges” (Parker, 2004: 6).² Moreover, the community college system has recently created an initiative, the Minority Male Mentoring Program, which intends to increase graduation and retention rates among minority men in the North Carolina Community College System (Parker, 2004). Perhaps it is because of programs such as these – though they are rather small scale – that a Latino leader noted: “I think that one of the things that I find fascinating is that the community colleges not only have the 58 campuses, but I think that they have one of the most flexible institutions with a true open door policy.”

Below we review both state access policies specifically addressed to minority and low-income students and state policies that – while helping such students – are not specifically directed to them. We will focus on these policies: open door admissions, tuition, student aid, outreach to potential students, a comprehensive curriculum, and convenient access.

Open Door Admissions

The North Carolina Administrative Code explicitly states the system’s open admissions policy: “Each college shall maintain an open-door admission policy to all applicants who are high school graduates or who are at least 18 years of age. Student admission processing and placement determination shall be performed by the officials of each college. Admission requirements for an emancipated minor shall be the same as for an applicant 18 years old or older” (N.C. Administrative Code, Title 23, chap. 02C.0301).

But this open access does not mean access to a particular program or even to credit-bearing courses. If students do not have a high school diploma, they are admitted into a GED program. If they successfully complete the program and then pass the college placement exam, they can then move into college level courses. But if students do not score well on the college placement exam, they are asked to take remedial courses before they are eligible to take college level courses. Finally, even if eligible for college level courses, students may not necessarily be accepted into more selective programs such as nursing.

Undocumented immigrants are not guaranteed access to community colleges by state law, but they are also not barred. Admission is left to local discretion by the community colleges. In 2001, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) issued a memorandum to all community colleges allowing them to admit undocumented students to dual-enrollment and noncredit basic skills courses. In summer 2004, the NCCCS issued an administrative memorandum to all community colleges *permitting* them to enroll undocumented students in credit-bearing academic programs (Biswas, 2005; North Carolina Community College System, 2001, 2004d).

Currently, North Carolina does not have any caps or restrictions on enrollments, except for selective programs such as nursing.

Evaluations by Respondents

Though the recent administrative memos issued by the state Community College System have made it easier for undocumented students to enter community college, the students' enrollment is not guaranteed. It is simply permitted. A Latino leader in North Carolina pointed this out:

It's not necessarily an open door policy. You're not able to register for a curriculum course [in some colleges]. You are also, in some situations, not able to register for even some continuing ed courses. Some community colleges in our 58 community college system have very strict rules. And now, under an administrative mandate, we have changed that ruling and they can register as international students. So they pay out of state. But that is in effect this semester. It was not the case for the last two years. It's systemwide, but in the memo there is an option for presidents to assume it or, I mean it's not a mandate. It's system wide from the president of the community college system but it's not a mandate.

A question that has recently emerged is how community colleges are to respond to the fact that the North Carolina K-12 system no longer issues differentiated high school diplomas. Students in compensatory education now receive the same high school diploma as students in the college preparatory track.³ One community college has reacted by stating that it will not accept compensatory education students. However, the state has convened a committee to prepare a way of responding to this new situation without restricting access to the community college.

Tuition

Current Policy

All tuition and registration fees must be approved by the State Board of the Community College System (North Carolina Administrative Code, Title 23, Chap. 2D.0201). The average resident tuition and required fees for North Carolina community college students in 2005-06 were \$1,264, which was the third lowest in the nation (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 9).⁴ The estimated total net cost of attending a North Carolina community college (tuition, room, and board minus student aid) in 2004 represented on average 32% of the median family income of the bottom 40% of the population in income; this put North Carolina at much the same level as all the other first round Achieving the Dream states except Florida, which was the highest (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 9, 13; idem, 2004b).

Keeping Down Tuition

There is no formal state policy that seeks to keep community colleges affordable. However, there is a commitment by the legislature to keep tuition and fees down. They do not raise the rates as often as for four-year public universities. No policy exists to make tuition changes predictable.

Tuition Charged Undocumented Immigrants

Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for instate tuition. In 2003 and 2005, bills were introduced, but did not pass, to provide instate tuition for undocumented immigrants attending community colleges and the University of North Carolina if they have attended North Carolina high schools for at least four consecutive years before graduation and applied for legal immigration status. The 2005 bill was defeated after it sparked an outcry from opponents on talk radio stations and the Internet that led at least 9 of the 35 legislative sponsors and co-sponsors of the measure to pull their names off it (Biswas, 2005; Robertson, 2005).

Policy Proposals by Respondents

A Latino leader whom we interviewed strongly supported allowing undocumented residents to pay in-state, rather than out-of-state, tuition rates when they enroll at community colleges. Further, Latino organizations were major proponents of the 2005 bill (HB 1183) allowing instate rates that failed in the General Assembly (Robertson, 2005).

Student Aid

Current Policy

Nearly three quarters (73%) of North Carolina's student aid in 2003-04 took the form of grants, and 50% was given on the basis of need-based grants. This is about average for the first round Achieving the Dream states, though 12 percentage points lower than the national average (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005: 8). As tuitions rise at community colleges, the legislature has increased state financial aid allocations to help offset the tuition rises.

Need-Based Aid

The North Carolina Community College System administers a number of need-based aid programs. The biggest is the North Carolina Community College Grant and Loan Program, which was budgeted for \$10.9 million in the 2004-05 academic year. The program, administered by the State Board of the Community College System and the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA), is directed to students just above the poverty threshold. To be eligible, students must meet the following criteria: (1) be admitted to a curriculum program and be enrolled for at least six credit hours per semester, (2) be a North Carolina resident, (3) have completed and submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), (4) qualify for the grant based upon a valid Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculation under federal methodology and the program's recognized "required educational expenses" for attending a

North Carolina community college, and (5) meet all other eligibility requirements for the federal Pell grant (North Carolina Community College System, 2005b; Parker, 2004: 5). The state also administers the Golden Leaf Scholars Program, which provided \$300 thousand to 962 low-income community college students in spring 2003-spring 2004 (Parker, 2004: 5).

Aid for Special Populations

Part-Time Students. The state operates a dedicated program for part-time students – the Less Than Half Time Program – that offers need-based assistance to students enrolled less than half time in certificate, diploma, or associate degree programs. Moreover, part-time students are eligible for the North Carolina Community College Grant Program described above if they are enrolled for at least six credits a semester (North Carolina Community College System, 2005b; Parker, 2004: 5).

Occupational Students. The Students Loan Funds for Vocational and Technical Education is available depending on enrollments levels and availability of funds. Recipients may be granted loans of no more than \$300 per academic school year (North Carolina Community College System, 1998).

Undocumented Immigrants. Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for state aid.

Linking Aid to Tuition Increases

There is only an informal linkage. The General Assembly has monitored the rise in tuition and has increased the North Carolina Community College Grant program funds to match the percentage increase in tuition.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

The state community college system has applied for funds from the College Goal Sunday program of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (2005) in order to get more students to file the FAFSA form and therefore qualify for federal aid.

The state is looking at the idea of short-term loans as a means of retaining students in college.

Outreach to Potential Students

Current Policy

Outreach Programs

The College Foundation of North Carolina – an initiative of the North Carolina Community College System, the University of North Carolina, and the North Carolina independent colleges – runs a website (www.cfnc.org) and toll-free number to give students and parents information on college opportunities, application procedures, and financial aid. The state also has a state GEAR UP grant and five GEAR UP partnership programs serving 27 of 100 counties (College Foundation of North Carolina, 2005; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

Dual Enrollment

The Innovative Education Initiatives Act of 2003 (SB 656) authorizes local community colleges and local boards of education to work cooperatively to “expand students’ opportunities for educational success through high quality instructional programming.” These collaborative efforts target both advanced students and students who are at risk of dropping out of high school (National Conference of State Legislators, 2003; North Carolina General Assembly, 2003, p. 1).

High school-community college collaborative efforts take two different forms in North Carolina (North Carolina Community College System and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2003, p. 3): First, under the “Huskins Bill” of 1983 (HB 1044, N.C. Gen. Stats. 115-D-20(4), 23 NCAC 2C.0305), community colleges and local public schools can establish cooperative programs that permit high school students to take college level academic, technical and advanced vocational courses at the high school at no charge.⁵ Secondly, community colleges can run Dual/Concurrent Enrollment programs – without having an agreement with the local public schools – to allow high school students to enroll at the community college in credit programs or noncredit continuing education courses (except Basic Skills courses) at no charge (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; North Carolina Community College System and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2003c; Parker, 2004).⁶ Community colleges do not charge tuition of dually enrolled students. However, they do get regular FTE-based state funding for those students. Meanwhile, the local school district will get their average daily attendance (ADA) enrollment as well.

In addition to the above, the state community college system has implemented – at the urging of Governor Mike Easley – an initiative (Learn and Earn), by which high school students can earn an associate degree by the time they leave high school. It involves the development of new high schools – primarily on community college campuses – that will allow students to graduate after five years with both a high school diploma and either a community college associate degree or two years of college credit (North Carolina Community College System, 2005i).

Comprehensive Curriculum

Many minority and low-income students are attracted not by college level academic curricula but by other kinds of programs such as adult basic education (ABE). To what degree is the provision of such curricula subject to state support or guidance?

Current Policy

HB 583, signed into law in June 2005, designates the Community Colleges System Office as the primary lead agency for delivering workforce development training, adult literacy training, and adult education programs in the State.

Occupational Education

Occupational education has been the backbone and focus of the North Carolina Community College system. The mission of the state community college system is defined statutorily (N.C. Gen. Stat. 115D-1) and includes the following passage: “The major purpose of each and every institution...shall be and shall continue to be the offering of vocational and technical education and training, and of basic, high school level, academic education needed in order to profit from vocational and technical education” (quoted in Lancaster, 1999, p. 328).

Basic Skills Programs

The community college basic skills program is divided into five different programs: (1) adult basic education (ABE): instruction for adults who lack competence in reading, writing, speaking, problem solving, or computation at a level necessary to function in society, on a job or in the family; (2) general educational development (GED): instruction designed to prepare adult students to pass the GED tests that lead to a high school diploma equivalency; (3) adult high school (AHS): instruction offered cooperatively with local public school systems to help adults earn an Adult High School Diploma; (4) English literacy/English as a second language (ESL): instruction designed to help adults who have limited English proficiency achieve competence in the English language; (5) compensatory education (CED): educating students who have not had an education or who have received an inadequate one. In 2000-2001, more than 159,000 adults were enrolled in Basic Skills program (North Carolina Community College System, 2004a: p. 26).

The state provides dedicated funding for basic skills instruction on an FTE basis. Because it is given on a noncredit basis, it is funded at a lower level than for credit courses: basic skills courses receive 84% as much funding per course unit.

Convenient Access

Especially for working adults, access to the community college is greatly aided if community colleges reach out through nontraditional schedules, dispersed locations, and distance education.

Current Policy

Location

There are 155 “dedicated” facilities – eligible for state funding – in 92 of 100 counties. Besides the main campuses, there are also off-campus centers that provide noncredit courses (e.g., basic skills, contract training) and multi-campus sites that allow students to pursue a full four-year degree. As such, there is a North Carolina community college or extension center within 30 miles of every citizen in the state (Lancaster, 1999: 327; North Carolina Community College System, 2003b).

There is no state policy that mandates the provision of satellite facilities or the presence of a community college facility within a certain radius of every location within the state. However, enrollees at satellite facilities get regular FTE funding. Moreover, in recent years, the state has provided extra funding to cover the overhead costs of those satellite facilities.

Distance Education

Distance education courses accounted for 6% of the courses offered in 2001-2002 (North Carolina Community College System, 2005c). During that academic year, there were 155,000 student registrations (the actual number of students is lower because of multiple registrations).

The state’s Virtual Learning Community (VLC), which began in 1997, assists colleges in offering distance learning courses. In addition, staff at the System Office manage other types of distance learning delivery systems, including telecourses and interactive video courses through the North Carolina Information Highway (Parker, 2004: 7). In terms of course delivery, the state pays for the staff and instructional expenses and line charges for distance education; however, facilities and maintenance costs are picked up by the counties.

Evaluations by Respondents

A major challenge for the state in expanding distance education is the fact that many families do not have computers. Moreover, some communities have little or no broadband or wireless capability (Parker, 2004: 10).

SUCCESS POLICIES

Public Commitment to Student Success

The 2003-2005 System Plan states four goals for the North Carolina Community College System. The second goal is to address the “increasing diverse learners’ needs through innovative nontraditional and traditional programs.” Within this goal, one stated objective is to implement strategies that promote and increase participant success (North Carolina Community College System, 2004a).

These goals and objectives are not stated specifically for minority and low-income students. Moreover, the realization of the goals is dependent on the budget. State funding for student support services is easily cut when revenues are down. As a community college president noted, “I think there is recognition [of issues related to student success], I am not too certain there is a commitment. I don’t see a lot of dollars flowing into that particular need...when you have economic shortfalls in your community and in your state the first things to go are the special services. Until we see an influx of additional revenues when this state gets back on its feet you are not going to see outreach programs or additional programs.”

However, the community college system has recently created an initiative, the Minority Male Mentoring Program, which intends to increase graduation and retention rates among minority men in the North Carolina Community College System (Parker, 2004).

Below we examine the following state policies that affect success in the community college: remediation, academic guidance and support, non-academic guidance and support, transfer advising and support, baccalaureate provision, noncredit to credit articulation, and workforce preparation and economic development.

Remediation

Many minority and low-income students come into the community college inadequately prepared to do college level study. They therefore need remedial education or developmental education. But what does the state do to ensure such remediation is provided effectively?

Current Policy

We examine several different features of remediation policy: financing, testing upon entry to college, assignment to remediation, opportunity to take non-remedial courses, student eligibility

for financial aid, content of remediation, exiting from remediation, and reducing the need for remediation.

Financing

Remediation qualifies for state funding through the general state funding formula. There is no dedicated funding just for remedial education (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002: 3). There is no state-set limit on the number of times that a student can take a remedial course and the college still receive state FTE funding. However, as with all for-credit courses, the colleges are required to set their own policy on course repetition and then adhere to it.

Testing upon Entry

In 1999 the State Board of the Community College System adopted mandatory entry level testing. There is no state policy providing (or forbidding) exemption if students have achieved a certain level on the SAT or ACT; this is a matter of institutional policy. By state law, students are exempted from placement testing if they have passed the placement exam or passed the first level college-credit program in, say, mathematics or English at another community college. However, a number of community colleges have not been honoring this requirement, which has become a concern to state community college officials.

The state has determined which exams can be used for entry level testing. The colleges have a choice among ASSET, COMPASS, and CPT/Accuplacer) (Prince, 2004). The General Assembly has mandated that the Community College System should develop uniform cut scores. However, it has been difficult to reach consensus across the colleges on what the cut scores should be. The state community college board is likely to finally declare what the cut off scores should be in summer of 2006.

Assignment to Remediation

Decisions about whether students who fail the entrance test are required to take remediation are left to the institutions.

Opportunity to Take Non-Remedial Courses

Decisions about whether students taking remediation in one subject can take college level courses in another are left to the institutions.

Student Eligibility for Financial Aid

Students taking remediation courses are eligible for state financial aid.

Content of Remediation

By state law, the remedial courses that colleges can offer are determined by the state Common Course Library. It lists the allowable courses, provides common course descriptions, and sets competencies for courses that are to be consistent across all the colleges (North Carolina Community College System, 1998).

Exiting from Remediation

Decisions about whether a student is ready to leave remediation are left to the colleges. Some colleges do not have any type of exit testing.

Reducing the Need for Remediation

In order to improve high school preparation, the legislature has mandated that community colleges report to local education agencies on the number of high school graduates who must enroll in remedial education. The Innovative Education Initiatives Act of 2003 (SB 656) directs the Education Cabinet to put a priority on cooperative efforts between secondary schools and institutions of higher education in order to, among other things, decrease the need for remediation in institutions of higher education (North Carolina General Assembly, 2003).

Evaluations by Respondents

A local community college leader told us that a student may take a developmental course at one community college but another community college may not accept that course as fulfilling a remedial requirement and may prevent the student from proceeding to the next level within that academic subject area. A state official noted that this practice is a violation of state code that state officials were aware of, and will be taking action to stop. When the state went to a common course catalog and common course numbering in 1997-98, it was with the intent that if a student passes a course at one community college, they cannot be required to repeat that course at another college. This policy was to apply as well to developmental courses.

Academic Counseling and Guidance

Current Policy

The state does not provide dedicated funding for academic counseling and guidance beyond the fact that it does provide for hiring one counselor position. There are no state regulations governing the form and content of how academic counseling is provided.

Evaluations by Respondents

State spending for student support has been a target for cuts when state revenues are low. As a community college president noted, “probably out of all the funding cuts, student services has taken the biggest hit because they are not in the classrooms.”

Policy Proposals by Respondents

A gubernatorial advisor noted the need to provide more support for academic counseling:

There is a level of student support in terms of counseling, in terms of financial aid, in planning. Just the kinds of student support services you might have at a university to help students move through that college experience....It would be less than candid to say we haven't sliced that over time in order to keep access as high as possible. Some of the student support services have taken a little bit of a hit in previous years and I think that is an area where the community college system will probably tell you we really need some assistance.

The state community college system is recommending to the legislature in 2006 that it provide funds for additional counselors in the community colleges.

Non-Academic Counseling And Support

Current Policy

There are no state rules governing the form and content of the provision of non-academic counseling. The state does not provide dedicated funding for non-academic counseling and guidance or lay out standards for its provision, except for two small programs. In 2003-04, \$74 thousand was awarded to five community colleges to provide educational programs, academic improvement, and substance-abuse education for minority male students (Parker, 2004: 6). Furthermore, the state budgeted \$2 million to fund child care services for students with children. Each community college received \$20,000 plus a prorated amount based on FTE enrollments, with the funds to go to child care providers (North Carolina Community College System, 2004a; Parker, 2004: 6).

Policy Proposals by Respondents

Both state officials and local community college heads mentioned in our interviews the importance of an increase in state funding for student support services such as tutoring, special support needs, and one-on-one counseling.

Transfer Assistance

Current Policy

North Carolina has expended great effort on transfer articulation between its community colleges and four-year institutions (both public and private). One of the most notable features is the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) between the two systems.

State Student Aid

There is no state student aid program designated specifically for transfer students. However, transfer students may apply for a Golden Leaf scholarship through the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. If eligible, they can receive this scholarship after transferring to a four-year college. Other state aid available to students who transfer includes the North Carolina Student Incentive Grant (NCSIG) and the North Carolina Legislative Tuition Grant (NCLTG). The NCLTG award is available to students who attend private North Carolina colleges. Also, the Glaxo, SmithKline scholarships assist students who pursue a bachelor degree leading to teacher certification through university programs on community college campuses.

Transfer Advising

The state Community College System supports a webpage providing: (1) the names of transfer coordinators at each college, and (2) the text of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement between the boards of the state Community College System and the University of North Carolina. Meanwhile, the University of North Carolina supports a webpage that also provides Transfer Performance Reports for each of the community colleges and a computerized transfer application (North Carolina Community College System, 2005h; University of North Carolina, 2005).

There is no funding specifically for transfer advising at the community colleges. Expenditures for this service come out of the regular state funding for student services. Moreover, there are no regulations governing the form and content of transfer advising beyond a state requirement that community colleges identify one of their academic advisors as the person who will provide transfer advice.

Transfer of Academic Associate Degrees

Under the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) between the boards of the state Community College System and of the University of North Carolina (UNC), students graduating from a community college with an academic associate degree are “assured” admission to one of the 16 UNC institutions if they meet certain conditions: most notably, that they have met all the requirements of the CAA, have an overall GPA of at least 2.0, and have achieved a grade of C or better in all CAA courses. Moreover, they are guaranteed status as a junior and as having satisfied the lower-division general education requirements of the receiving institution (Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System, 2005; North Carolina Community College System, 2005g; North Carolina General Assembly, 2004, pp. 2-3; Parker, 2004).

Occupational Education Transfer

Students enrolled in an associate of applied science (AAS) program are guaranteed credit for general education courses that they received a C or higher in. Otherwise, the transfer of occupational (AAS) courses is not regulated by statewide rules but by bilateral articulation agreements between individual community colleges and four-year colleges (Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System, 2005).

General Education Transfer

North Carolina has defined a 44 semester-credit hour general education core that is fully transferable across the community college system and between that system and all the UNC institutions and 22 private colleges. Transfer students who complete the general education core at a North Carolina community college will not be required to take other lower division general education classes at a UNC institution even if a student’s 44-semester credit hour core does not completely match the receiving institution’s core. However, this guarantee only holds if a student has an overall GPA of 2.0 and a grade of C or better in all core courses (Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System, 2005; North Carolina General Assembly, 2004, pp. 2-3; Parker, 2004).

Specific Major Modules

Joint academic disciplinary committees of the state Community College System and the University of North Carolina have developed systemwide guidelines for curricula that will prepare students for certain majors at the baccalaureate level (Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System, 2005).

Common Course Numbering

Section 3 of HB 739 (1995) mandated that the State Board of Community Colleges implement a common course numbering system, including common course descriptions, for all community college programs. The common course library includes approximately 3,800 semester-credit courses written for the associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs offered in the North Carolina Community College system. Colleges select courses from the Common Course Library to design all curriculum programs (Parker, 2004).

The common course numbering system was developed in partnership between the North Carolina Community College System and the University of North Carolina System. The system is updated yearly by the Transfer Advisory Committee, which consists of four representatives from the community college system, four from UNC, and one from the independent colleges (Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of the North Carolina Community College System, 2005; North Carolina Community College System, 1998, p. 83; North Carolina General Assembly, 2004, p. 2; Parker, 2004).

Evaluations by Respondents

According to the Vice President for Academic and Student Services for the North Carolina Community College System, “many of the educational barriers that existed prior to the implementation of the CAA have been removed, making the seamless transfer process easier for community college students to the UNC-System” (Parker, 2004: p. 6). In the 2002-2003 academic year 4,493 students with an average GPA of 2.65 transferred from a North Carolina community college into one of the 16 institutions that comprise the University of North Carolina. (University of North Carolina, 2005).

One issue that remains is ease of transfer between community colleges. As a state community college official noted, cases have cropped up where community colleges have refused to accept courses taken at other community colleges despite the fact they are in the Common Course Library. Another issue is continuing obstacles to the transfer of occupational credits between community colleges and four-year colleges.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

A community college president with experience in Florida noted that it would be useful for the state to mandate transfer articulation agreements, as is the case in Florida.

Baccalaureate Provision

The state encourages community colleges to work with four-year colleges to have the latter offer upper-division courses at the community colleges. There are university centers at several community colleges: Lenoir Community College cooperating with North Carolina State on engineering education, six community colleges cooperating with East Carolina University on engineering and teacher education, and ten community colleges in western North Carolina working with Appalachian State University on teacher education. The Appalachian Learning Alliance allows community college students to get a baccalaureate degree in teacher education without ever having to leave the community college. The state, Wachovia Bank, and Glaxo SmithKline have put up money for these teacher preparation programs (North Carolina Community College System, 2005d).⁷

The state community college system has also developed five complete online degrees, allowing students to get an entire baccalaureate degree without leaving the community college. It has worked out this approach in teacher education and is now working on it with nursing. There are a number of bilateral agreements between some community colleges and some universities.

There is no state policy allowing community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees.

Noncredit to Credit Articulation

There are no state policies or funding with respect to easing the movement of students from noncredit to credit programs. However, the state does encourage community colleges to facilitate student movement from the noncredit to the credit curriculum, as when students come into the college through noncredit GED, ABE, and continuing education courses and are then encouraged to move into credit-bearing courses.

Workforce Preparation

Current Policy

Workforce preparation has long been perhaps the main mission of the community college system (Liebowitz et al., 2001). The stated missions of the North Carolina Community College System include the following: (1) education, training, and retraining for the workforce, including basic skills and literacy education, and occupational and pre-baccalaureate programs; (2) support for economic development through services to and in partnership with business and industry; (3) services to communities and individuals which improve the quality of life (North Carolina Community College System, 2005a). In fact, until 1995, no more than 15% of enrollments could be in transfer programs.

Moreover, state law requires the community colleges to offer contract training: “Customized training programs for new and expanding companies shall be provided to support the economic

development of the state. The training programs for new and expanding industries shall be administered by the college, with consultation and assistance from the Department's staff" (N.C. Administrative Code, Title 23, chap. 2E.0401). The state's New and Expanding Industry Training Program (NEIT), established in 1958, was the first state customized training program to serve the needs of businesses and industries that were creating new jobs in North Carolina. Today, it continues to be an integral component of North Carolina's economic development efforts. Occupational/vocational courses are offered on demand and customized for specific training needs. Colleges work with businesses, industry, and public/private agencies to develop and implement training to address the following: (1) retraining for dislocated workers, (2) bilingual training for the workplace, and (3) urgent public health-related training. Currently, there are over 1,400 approved courses, which are offered at levels as low as \$50 to \$65 per course. In 2003-04, community colleges provided job training to 10,117 individuals through New and Expanding Industry Training programs, and provided free customized training to 121 new and expanding companies in the state (North Carolina Community College System, 2003b, 2005f: 40; Regional Technology Strategies, 1999: 69-78).

In addition, community colleges have responded to the increasing demand for bilingual training for the workplace. Colleges are offering workplace Spanish training for workers in a variety of businesses and industries and for police, fire, and emergency workers. Meanwhile, for Spanish-speaking students, colleges have been offering courses in Spanish on subjects such as Introduction to Computers/MS Word, Welding, and How to Start a Small Business (North Carolina Community College System, 2003b).

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Current Policy

In 1989, the North Carolina General Assembly mandated a performance reporting system of "Critical Success Factors" (1989 Sess. Laws, C. 752, S. 80). In 1999, the legislature codified a set of 12 statewide assessment measures and established a financial incentive for colleges that performed well on six of those measures (H.B. 168, 1999 N.C. Sess. Laws 237, N.C. Gen. Stats. sec. 115D-31.3). Then, in 2001, the North Carolina Community College System began to publish a report describing the performance of all the colleges, and each college was required to publish each year its performance on the core indicators of success in its catalog (Harbour & Nagy, 2005; North Carolina Community College System, 2004c, 2005e).

When North Carolina mandated the state performance accountability system, it mandated that the content was to be consistent with the accountability guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. According to a state community college official, the two accountability requirements apparently have been very compatible.

Performance Indicators

When the legislature mandated the creation of accountability measures, it largely left their nature up to the State Board of the Community College System. However, the State Board has communicated closely with the legislature, and on occasion it has incorporated a measure or a standard that legislators or their staff have felt strongly about. This occurred with regard to two areas. One was college transfer, where a prominent staffer demanded that the transfer students perform as well as native juniors at the universities. Another one was passage of licensure exams, where a staffer demanded a higher pass rate than was typically required by the professional associations.

Unlike Florida, the legislature in North Carolina has been resistant to requests by the colleges to change the performance accountability indicators in ways that would benefit them. However, the state has modified the measures on the basis of comments received from community college administrators and faculty. For example, the employment rate for graduates is now adjusted to take into account the local general unemployment rate.

There are five Critical Success Factors, each of which consists of several measures. The first three are oriented toward institutional performance; the last two are not (North Carolina Community College System, 2004a, b).

Factor I is a set of 12 Core Indicators of Student Success:

- Progress of Basic Skills Students.
- Passing Rates on Licensure and Certification Examinations.
- Goal Completion for Completers (see the definition of completion below).
- Employment Status of Graduates.
- Performance of College Transfer Students.
- Passing Rates of Students in Developmental Courses.
- Success Rate of Developmental Students in Subsequent College Level Courses.
- Satisfaction of Program Completers and Non-Completers.
- Curriculum Student Retention and Graduation.
- Employer Satisfaction With Graduates.
- Client Satisfaction with Customized Training.
- Program Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment.

Factor II consists of four workforce development measures (North Carolina Community College System, 2004a, b):

- Percentage of High Demand Occupations Encompassed by Training Programs.
- Percentage of Employers Satisfied with NCCCS Training Programs.
- Percentage of College Tech Prep Students Enrolling in a Community College.
- Number of Employers and Trainees Served by New and Expanding Industry Training (NEIT), Focused Industrial Training (FIT), Small Business Centers, and Customized Training (NCCCS).

Factor III consists of seven measures of meeting the learning needs of diverse populations (North Carolina Community College System, 2004a, b):

- Number and Percentage of (High School) Dropouts Annually Served by Basic Skills Programs.
- Number of GEDs and AHSDs Awarded Compared to the Number of Dropouts Statewide.
- Percentage of Basic Skills Students and Recent High School Graduates Enrolling in a Community College.
- Unduplicated Headcount in English as a Second Language.
- Number of Under-Represented Students Enrolled Per Category.
- Percentage of Students Receiving Financial Aid and Amount of Aid Compared with Cost of Attendance.
- Percentage of the Adult Population in Service Area Enrolled.

Factors IV and V and are not performance measures but rather measures of institutional resources (Factor IV) and provision of distance education (Factor V).

The state's performance measures are presented in Appendix Table A1 below.

Data Collection Procedures

The North Carolina Community College System has a statewide data warehouse on a unit record level basis. The data warehouse does not now encompass data from the state university and K-12 systems but the state is working on a data warehouse covering grades P-20.

Data are occasionally broken down by student race and age. However, they are not broken down by student income. The data system is funded by the state and all training is conducted by the North Carolina Community College System office.

The North Carolina Community College System began moving to a statewide computer system in summer 2005. All phases of this movement are to be completed by fall 2007. The system will allow much better monitoring of student progress.

Connection of Performance Measures to State Funding

North Carolina has a performance funding system, in which colleges can receive additional funds depending on how well they perform on six state indicators. Five of the indicators are required (the first five of the 12 Core Indicators of Student Success) and the sixth is chosen by a college from the remaining Core Indicators. For each of these six measures on which a college performs "satisfactorily" (at or above the state standards), the college may carry forward into the next fiscal year one third of 1% of its final fiscal year General Fund appropriations.⁸ And if the college performs satisfactorily on at least five of these six measures (this is regarded as "superior" performance), it gets to share equally with other superior colleges in the general funds

remaining unallocated by the North Carolina Community College System at the end of the fiscal year. In effect, this rewards colleges for operating more efficiently, so that they do not use up all their state appropriation (G.S. 115D-31.3 (g); Harbour & Nagy, 2005: 450).

Evaluations by Respondents

Use by State Officials to Craft State Policy

According to a state community college official, performance data have had little impact on policy decisions by the state. The focus has been on changing the behavior of the local community colleges. However, there are some instances of changes in state practice, even if not strictly speaking in policy. A state community college official noted:

I cannot point to any policy changes that have resulted from the performance measures. However, I can point to several examples of the impact of the performance measures on state activity. For example, the college transfer data caused quite a ripple through our system. As a result, the association of college transfer faculty was revived and I have been working closely with them on developing procedures and policies at the local college level that would improve the way in which college transfer students are identified and tracked. This group has also focused on sharing “best practices” among each other and as a result, there has been a steady increase in the performance of our college transfer students. Similarly, several workgroups of faculty have organized to analyze the licensure exams in the areas of EMT, real estate and nursing to ensure that our curriculum matches the expectations of the licensure boards.

Moreover, the State Community College Board and the University of North Carolina Board have recently approved a Diploma Readiness Program, which defines a student who completes the 44-credit general education core as a graduate. This would help the colleges perform better on one of the Critical Success Factors. If the federal Higher Education Act is reauthorized with a graduation requirement for Title IV, the Diploma Readiness Program would allow the North Carolina community colleges to better meet this requirement.

Use by Local Community College Officials

There is some difference of opinion on how much of an impact performance funding has had on local community colleges. One local official stated that the amount of money involved was small:⁹

The core indicators right now are you get a few thousand bucks and we received \$120,000....I think it provides a little flexibility...having the \$120,000 helps us maybe explore the development of a new program or helps us put in place a new initiative that we wouldn't otherwise be able to do. So it does provide some help sort of on the margin, but it's not like we are being funded to a large degree based upon how many graduates we have; it's a few extra dollars relative to the total overall institutional budget. It's nice, but it's not big enough to really cause us to rethink what we are doing in a substantial institution-changing way. Whereas if suddenly 80% of our funding as opposed to 1% of funding was based upon number of graduates, we would be damn sure that we would be producing graduates at much higher levels. So it's a marginal thing; it's icing on the cake.

On the other hand, a state official noted that Central Piedmont College in 2004 netted over \$700 thousand in performance funding: \$600 thousand that it was able to carry over and another \$100 thousand from its share of the unallocated state general funds. Moreover, colleges that have not been able to carry over funding, because they spent down their whole budgets, have begun to get concerned about this. Their faculty – noting that the carryover funds could have been used to provide faculty bonuses – have begun to complain.

Beyond the financial impact, there is another way that the state may have more impact and that is through the threat of program termination when the performance results are not good. A community college president noted:

If you don't have the success rate you need on your licensing examination you get a "friendly letter" from Raleigh and it says your students didn't pass, you didn't meet the requirements; therefore you need to submit to us by x time a plan on how you are going to improve that. You have to identify why you think the students are not performing well on that licensing exam and you have to submit a plan on how you are going to correct that. They follow-up and make sure that it does get corrected...If you continue not to meet that the state could actually require you to terminate the program...let's say you have a measure of employee satisfaction with your graduates for example. If you don't meet that standard you are going to have to address that and you've got to bring that up.

As the quotation above indicates, colleges have responded to the state's performance accountability system by making changes. As the president above noted, one way is by improving the quality of programs so that they produce better licensure passage results. Program improvement was also cited by local community college officials interviewed by Harbour and Nagy (2005: 453). Another response was to improve post-transfer performance of community college transfers by developing learning communities, improving student advisement, and better monitoring student performance (Harbour & Nagy, 2005: 453-456).

Aside from the threat of state penalties, community colleges could change on the basis of their own analysis of their performance data. However, the state's community colleges are very dependent on the state system to analyze data for them. As a state official notes, the state is trying to change this by training community college staffers in basic statistical analysis so that the colleges can do their own analyses.

Policy Proposals

A state community college official recommended that the state's performance measures include a measure of remediation success in which the denominator is the number of those who *begin* remediation. Currently, the state's measures are based on those who *complete* remediation: for example, the grades they achieved in the remediation course and in later courses. Moreover, another useful performance measure would be the number of adult literacy students who move into college credit courses.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

North Carolina has made notable efforts, particularly in the areas of remediation, transfer, and performance accountability policy. However, there are other areas where it has made less effort and may deserve greater policymaking activity. They include policies for undocumented students, vocational transfer, academic and non-academic guidance and counseling, and noncredit to credit transfer.

The North Carolina Community College System has been more or less able to create the legal basis for undocumented students to be given a good chance of access to community college. But the rapidly rising number of undocumented residents in the state argues for continuing the effort to provide such students access to instate tuition and state student aid, despite the failure of legislation to do so.

As with the other Achieving the Dream states, North Carolina does not provide any dedicated state funding or standards for academic, non-academic, and transfer guidance and counseling. Yet, it is clear that good counseling – especially if it does not entail preconceived ideas of what jobs less advantaged students are destined for – can play an important role in expanding opportunity. The lack of dedicated funding and state standards for counseling leaves it at the mercy of the wax and wane of community college funding and the belief that counseling is a frill that can be cut back when other demands are heard.

The state's provisions for transfer are extensive and detailed yet more changes might be in order. One discussed above is state funds and standards for transfer guidance and counseling. Another is the establishment of a state aid program specifically for transfer students, since their needs are different from those of students just entering college. In addition, while the state provides for the

transfer of the general education component of occupational programs, it largely leaves to bilateral agreements the transfer of other credits. Here the state could benefit from following Texas and Florida in working out a goodly number of detailed transfer modules for occupational programs.

While North Carolina does encourage noncredit to credit transfer, more state support is needed, particularly in a state where many workers are being laid off from manufacturing jobs and then seeking retraining at community colleges. Their career paths would be enhanced if the noncredit training they often get could be linked to or transformed into college credits.

Finally, while the state's performance accountability system is extensive and well articulated, there are some areas where additions could be made, such as consideration of the extent of transfer (the numbers of transfers or the rate of transfer) and the extent of movement from the noncredit to credit curriculum. In addition, because the community colleges are still not much used to analyzing their own performance data, it is important that the state provide funds for hiring full-time institutional researchers and providing them with training and technical assistance.

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ENDNOTES

¹ We wish to thank all those whom we interviewed about state community college policy in North Carolina. We also wish to thank Dolores Parker, Keith Brown, and Blake Reynolds of the North Carolina Community College System, Katherine Johnson formerly president of Nash Community College, Sarah Rubin of MDC, Inc., and Lara Couturier of Brown University for their comments on this chapter. Needless to say, all errors are our responsibility.

² These state initiatives have been backed up by local efforts. A leader of the Latino community in North Carolina notes that the community colleges in the state have done the following: (1) increased the number of ESL classes offered at community colleges, (2) hired outreach liaison workers at many community colleges to inform the Latino community about the programs community colleges offer and to assist Latino students with the admissions procedures, and (3) increased the number of noncredit courses in Spanish in such areas as welding, electricity, and horticulture.

³ Compensatory students are ones educated in alternative programs such as those for children of migrant workers.

⁴ The estimated average nonresident tuition and required fees in 2005-06 were \$7,024 (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 10).

⁵ These courses cannot supplant existing high school courses.

⁶ Besides the dual-enrollment programs, there are early college high school at community colleges. In 2004, the North Carolina New Schools Project proposed a five-year plan to create and redesign 100 high schools throughout the state. Many of these high schools will be placed on community college campuses and will provide “quality alternative schools, science, math, and technology-focused schools, and new models to turn around perpetually struggling high schools” (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; Parker, 2004).

⁷ It is explicitly intended to keep teacher education students on the community college campuses because it has been found that they are more likely to finish and stay in their home area than if they transfer to a four-year campus.

⁸ However, in years in which the state funds community colleges for less than 100% of their enrollments, it would seem that there would be no money to carry over.

⁹ This sentiment also appeared in interviews conducted by Harbour and Nagy (2005) with local community college officials in North Carolina about the impact of the state’s performance funding system.

APPENDIX TABLE A1

North Carolina Outcomes Data

| Measure | Reported to Public | | |
|--|--------------------|----------|--------|
| | By CC | By race | By SES |
| ACCESS MEASURES | | | |
| Enrollment | | | |
| Program enrollments | CSF | CSF; FB* | |
| Proportion of workforce education enrollment in comparison to proportion of all community college enrollments | FB; CSF* | CSF* | |
| ESL enrollments | FB | FB | |
| Distance learning enrollments | CSF | | |
| Basic skills enrollments: Number and percentage of dropouts annually served by basic skills programs | FB | | |
| Adult enrollments: Percentage of area population | CSF | | |
| SUCCESS MEASURES | | | |
| Retention: Fall to fall retention of first-time, full-time degree-seeking entrants. | CSF | | |
| Remedial success: Percentage of developmental students completing course with C grade or better | SREB* | | |
| Remedial success: Percentage of basic skills students who moved to a higher level | CSF | | |
| Remedial success: Percentage of developmental education completers who had a C or better in a subsequent college level course | CSF | | |
| Graduation: Gross number of graduates | CSF | | |
| Completion: Rates of graduation or still enrolled | FB* | | |
| Graduation: Number of GEDs and Adult High School Diplomas (AHSDs) awarded | CSF | | |
| Student goal realization: Percent of completers (of certificate, diploma, or degree programs) who report meeting their goal for attending a CC | CSF | | |
| Post-transfer performance: Of individuals who completed 24 or more credits or obtained an associate degree at CC, percentage who had GPA ≥ 2.0 after two semesters at UNC institution | CSF | | |
| Job Placement: Percentage of workforce program graduates employed within one year of last attendance | CSF | | |
| Licensure exam passage: Percent of students in a discipline requiring external certification or licensure who pass licensure or certification | CSF | | |

| Measure | Reported to Public | | |
|--|--------------------|---------|--------|
| | By CC | By race | By SES |
| exam | | | |
| Student satisfaction: Percentage of graduates and early leavers who are satisfied with college's programs and services | CSF | | |
| Numbers enrolled in workforce development/continuing education | CSF*; FB*; EWD* | CSF* | |
| Number of firms served through contract training or tuition agreements | CSF; FB* | | |
| Employer satisfaction with the quality of program completers | CSF | | |
| Employer satisfaction with contract training and small business dev. | CSF | | |

Notes:

* Indicates that data are available only for the system as a whole and not broken down by institution.

Sources:

CSF: *Critical Success Factors* (North Carolina Community College System, 2005e).

EWD: *North Carolina Community College System Economic and Workforce Development: Annual Report* (North Carolina Community College System, 2004c)

FB: *A Matter of Facts: The North Carolina Community College System Fact Book* (North Carolina Community College System, 2005f)

SREB: Reported to the Southern Regional Education Board for its State Data Exchange. These data are for the system as a whole and are not broken down by institution (www.sreb.org/main/EdData/DataExch/dataexchindex.asp).

CHAPTER FIVE

TEXAS¹

Texas is a natural subject of any study of state policymaking to affect community college access and success for minority and low-income students. For one, the state's two-year college system is very large, enrolling 1.1 million students in academic year 2002-03 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2004a). Moreover, the state has a large minority population in need of access to higher education. Finally, the state has made a strong public commitment to increasing access and success in the community college for minority and low income students (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000).

In what follows, we first set the stage by describing the state context: the size and composition of the state population, the nature of its economy, the structure of the community college system, its governance and finance, and enrollment trends facing the community college. We then move to describe the state's policies affecting access to and success in the community college for minority and low-income students. As part of this discussion we address the state's provisions for performance accountability since they have clear relevance to both state policy and the aim of the Achieving the Dream (AtD) initiative to use the analysis of data as the main lever to improve community college efforts and state policies to improve student access and success. As we go along, we note any evaluations our interviewees made of those policies and any policy proposals they offered.

This report is the product of intensive interviews and analysis of documents. We interviewed officials of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, state legislators and staff, gubernatorial advisors, top officials of four community colleges, and heads of local community based organizations representing African Americans and Latinos in Texas. The four community colleges represented different types – urban, suburban, and small town – located in north, central, south, and west Texas. The documents analyzed included materials by Texas state agencies and by external organizations such as the Education Commission of the States and the Southern Regional Education Board.

THE STATE CONTEXT

Population Size and Composition

Approximately 22.1 million people resided in Texas in 2003, making the state the second most populous in the nation. In that year, 84% of the population identified itself racially as white (with 50% as non-Hispanic whites); 12% as Black/African American; 3% as Asian or Pacific Islander; less than 1% as American Indian; and 1% as of two or more races. Meanwhile, 34% identified ethnically as Hispanic or Latino; these individuals can be of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005: 24).

Between 2001-02 and 2013-14, the composition of public high school graduates in Texas is expected to change considerably. The income background of high school graduates is not expected to change much, but the racial-ethnic composition will. The minority share of high-school graduates is projected to rise from 50 percent in 2001-02 to 63 percent in 2013-14, with Hispanics accounting for the bulk of this increase (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003).

Economic Structure

The state's gross state product in 2004 was \$880.9 billion, third largest in the nation. But this ranking belies the fact that many Texans are not well off. The state per capita personal income in 2004 was only 32nd in the nation, at \$30,222 in 2004. The state's poverty rate averaged 16.3% over the years 2002-2003, substantially above the national average of 12.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2005a, b).

Nature of the Community College System

Texas has 50 community college districts with 110 locations where full degrees can be awarded (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2003a).² The public two-year colleges accounted for 51% of total credit enrollments in Texas institutions of higher education in 2001 (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 13).

While the majority of Texas community college students are white (52 percent), Hispanics now make up one fourth of community and technical college (CTC) enrollments (27 percent), Blacks about one eighth (12 percent), and other racial-ethnic groups about 7 percent (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2003a). Nearly three fifths (57%) of Texas' community college campuses meet the Achieving the Dream criteria of either being at least one third minority in enrollment or having at least half their students be eligible for Pell grants.

Governance and Finance

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is the sole state body that coordinates community colleges and universities. The Governor appoints the 15 at-large members (the number is eventually to go to 9) of the coordinating board with the advice and consent of the state senate. The coordinating board's responsibilities include coordinating all of higher education statewide and making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature about higher education needs. At the local level, governance of the community colleges lies with locally elected boards of trustees. The state system is highly decentralized, with great resistance to a high degree of state direction (Barron, 1999: 407-411).

In fiscal year 2001, state government accounted for 37% of the educational and general revenues of community colleges. The other sources were local tax revenues (21%), student tuition and fees (19%), and other (23%) (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2003b: 18).

Since appropriations are based on contact hours, the institutions should benefit from increasing participation by minority and low-income students. However, the legislature only meets every two years, so institutions are always behind in funding even before considering that they are funded below 100%. Because the state only funds a portion of program costs, community colleges have increased their tuition and fees and the local boards have raised the local taxes. However, this last expedient is threatened by the fact that bills have been introduced in the State Legislature to cut state and local taxes.

There is no state policy that requires areas that are within a community college's service area – but not within the tax district supporting it – to pay taxes to support the community college. This issue was raised repeatedly by state and community college officials whom we interviewed. The colleges have asked the state to act on it, but with no result. Hence, for now community colleges are charging higher tuition and fees to their out-of-district, but within-service-area, students. But the extra revenue garnered through such differential pricing is usually not enough – though there are exceptions – to make up for the tax revenue loss. Therefore, a community college official recommended that the state require all localities to be in a community college taxing district.

Enrollment Demands

Between 2001-02 and 2017-18, the number of public high school graduates in Texas is expected to increase by 30 percent (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003). The Education Commission of the States (2003) has estimated that Texas has to increase its postsecondary enrollments by 86% (over one million more students) between 2000 and 2015 if it is to match the performance of the best-performing ("benchmark") states.

In the following, we will look at state policies affecting the community college under three headings: access policies, success policies, and – because it is a category crossing both –

performance accountability. We describe the policies in place, report on our respondents' evaluations of those policies, and describe their proposals for new policies.

ACCESS POLICIES

Public Commitment to Increasing Access

Public commitment by state government to addressing inequalities of access and success by race and income appears to be strong in Texas, though there are noteworthy caveats. First, Governor Rick Perry has made it a priority of his administration. As one observer put it, "This is what he'd like to be the hallmark of his administration. He's not been able to do it so much because we've got to resolve our problems with a K-12 education funding."

Second, the commitment to access is evident in the much publicized "Closing the Gaps" (CTG) initiative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2000). This initiative is geared towards sharply improving rates of participation and graduation at Texas higher education institutions, especially for Latinos. The Coordinating Board has declared:

Texas stands at a crossroads....Enrollments in the state's public and independent colleges and universities are not keeping pace with the booming Texas population. There is a shortfall in the number of degrees and certificates earned. And, fewer degrees and certificates earned leads to a less-educated workforce. The state's workers are not able to support a growing state economy, which is necessary for a higher quality of life for all Texans, and individuals have fewer personal choices....The population projections of the state forecast the greatest growth to occur in urban areas and along the Texas border. By 2008, Texas will become a minority-majority state. Hispanics will account for more than 40 percent of the state's population. Blacks will represent 11 percent. Whites will be 45 percent. Other groups, including Asian-Americans, will represent 4 percent. The state's Hispanic and Black populations have enrolled in higher education at rates well below that of the White population. The educational enrollment and success rates for all Texans will have to rise more rapidly than ever to avoid a decline in educational levels. (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000, pp. 5, 7)

The first goal of the Closing the Gaps initiative is to greatly increase the number of students in higher education by 2015, particularly among Hispanics and Blacks. The initial goal was for 500,000 more students and an increase in the participations rates of Hispanic and Black students in higher education to 5.7 percent each by 2015.³ This would be an increase of 2 percentage points for Hispanic students and 1.1 percentage points for Black students. Community colleges are to be responsible for 70% of this increase (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000: 2). By 2004, the state had increased its enrollments at public two-year and four-year institutions by 188 thousand, which represented 126% of its target for 2005 and 38% of the

target for 2015. However, there is concern about the target for Latinos. As of 2004, the state had reached only 70% of its 2005 target for Latinos and 21% of its target for 2015. Both the positive overall figures and worrisome Latino figures led the Coordinating Board in July 2005 to tentatively decide to raise overall enrollments by 2015 by 650,000 rather than 500,000, with the majority of the extra 150,000 being Latinos (Haurwitz, 2005; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000; 2005h).

The strategies by which Goal 1 is to be achieved, as they relate to community colleges, include the following:

- linking the high school and college curricula so that the standard curriculum in high schools will be a college preparatory program, the successful completion of which would be an admissions requirement to a Texas public college;
- developing greater student familiarity with the academic and financial requirements necessary for college (a project that the College For Texans Foundation has undertaken with its GO campaign); and
- making higher education affordable through grants, scholarships, affordable tuition and fees, and increased efficiency.

Although Texas has set statewide benchmarks, it has also asked the public community colleges to submit recruitment and retention plans with goals that are appropriate for their surrounding areas. The institutions are supposed to be held accountable for meeting these goals, although there is no evidence that there is any punitive action if the institutions fail to do so.

The rationale for the Closing the Gaps initiative was provided by the state demographer, Steven Murdock, who stated forcefully and persuasively that Texas will find itself in an economic crisis if it does not increase participation rates in higher education for Hispanic students: “If participation and graduation rates remain low, the poverty rate in Texas will increase by 3 percent and the average Texas household income will decline by \$3,000 in constant dollars by 2030” (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000. p. 5). This message was repeated by many of our interviewees, whether state officials, community college heads, legislators, and community organizations. For example, a community college president noted: “If we just keep things the way they are and Hispanics continue to participate at a much lower rate than other Texans the result will be that we have a much less educated workforce and therefore will be less competitive in attempting to attract new business to the state and of course if the education levels are lower income levels will be lower and tax revenues for the state will be lower.” Similarly, a state official stated: “[The Hispanic community is] not the problem; th[ey] are an asset to the state and we need to make sure they are included in the educational benefits in order to push along our economy.”

Despite this commitment to close the gaps of access and success for minority and low-income students, local community college officials and the Texas Association of Community Colleges complain that state funding for the Closing the Gaps initiative has never been sufficient. As a community college president noted, “We’ve got a higher ed coordinating board at the state level,

giving us a charter to bring more people in. But they don't control the dollars. And because they don't control the dollars, the Legislature does, it's tough for me to say that there is strong support in encouraging minority students or lower income students into higher education." Although the community colleges are expected to accommodate the majority of the additional students by 2015, they have received no additional funding from the state for such an increase.

Below we review specific state policies that may encourage greater access to the community college by minority and low-income students. Some of these are specifically addressed to such students. But many – while helping minority and low-income students – are not specifically directed to them. We focus specifically on these policies: open door admissions, tuition, student aid, outreach to potential students, a comprehensive curriculum, and convenient access.

Open Door Admissions

A key form of access to higher education for minority and low-income students is the community college with its open door mission, and Texas is no exception.

Current Policy

Texas law requires that community colleges admit all high school graduates who are 17 years old or older or, regardless of degree, anyone who is eighteen years or older. This includes undocumented immigrants, who are guaranteed admission by state law to community colleges (Biswas, 2005).

Evaluations by Respondents

Even if the door is open, colleges may not have enough space for all students, especially in selective programs. Interviewees repeatedly noted the distinction between access to the institution and acceptance into particular courses or programs. Some interviewees noted that there is nothing in state regulation preventing institutions from not accommodating an increasing student population, and other interviewees said that there are cases of students who have not been able to attend because the courses they needed were not available. A state official commented: "Some of the college presidents say that because they have not been able to offer as many sections of certain courses they believe that some students are not taking as many courses as they would have. In fact, some students may have not continued their enrollment process when they realized they couldn't take courses that accommodate their work schedule or whatever. We don't really have any hard data on it. It is that sort of story that is heard during registration. I am sure there is some truth to it, but there is not really any evidence that it has impact." On the other hand, a community college official felt that course limitations were minor: "Thus far our institutions have been able to manage the state costs without limiting access. We probably had a few examples of institutions that weren't adding as many sections as it had in

prior year, limiting the number of students who'd be able to enroll in a certain kind of program, but those have been a very small number of instances.”

Tuition

Current Policy

The average resident tuition and required fees for Texas community college students in 2005-06 were \$1,493, which was the fourth lowest in the nation (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 9).⁴ The estimated total net cost of attending a Texas community college (tuition, room, and board minus student aid) in 2004 represented on average 32% of the median family income of the bottom 40% of the population in income; this put Texas at about average for the first round Achieving the Dream states (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 9, 13; idem, 2004b).

Tuition for resident students is set by the governing board of each community college, but the tuition cannot be less than \$8 per credit hour. Colleges can charge students higher tuition but it cannot exceed the rate for nonresident students (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

With state support, colleges provide tuition and fee waivers to certain kinds of students such as veterans and their dependents, disabled police or fire fighters and their children, high school students enrolled in community college dual-enrollment programs, and so forth (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005f; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

Keeping Down Tuition

There is a Coordinating Board resolution to keep down tuition. Also, there is a program linking student aid to tuition (see below).

Tuition Charged Undocumented Immigrants

A 2001 law (HB 1403) made Texas one of the earliest states to allow undocumented residents to qualify for instate tuition.⁵ Community colleges can charge instate tuition to these students if they graduated from a Texas high school, have lived in the state for at least three years, and have signed an affidavit that they will apply for permanent residence as soon as they are eligible (Biswas, 2005; Schiller, 2001).

Evaluations by Respondents

Despite a statement to match tuition levels to what students can afford and a proposal by the Coordinating Board to keep tuition low, the fact that the appropriations have not kept pace with enrollments (resulting in declining appropriations per full-time equivalent student) has resulted in increasing tuition, though the community colleges still cost significantly less than the four-year institutions.

The absence of state policy requiring those areas in the community colleges' service areas, but not taxing areas, to join has resulted in community colleges charging higher tuition and fees to out-of-district students.

Student Aid

Current Policy

In 2003-04, Texas spent \$413 million on student aid. Texas has no state aid programs specifically targeted to minority students, but it does strongly address low-income students. Most of its student aid (83%) goes for need-based grant aid, double the average for the other first-round Achieving the Dream states (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005: 8; Southern Regional Education Board, 2005: 18; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

Need-Based Aid

The best known state need-based aid programs are the TEXAS (Towards EXcellence, Access and Success) Grant and the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program (TEC 56.301ff and 56.401ff). The TEXAS Grant Program (formerly the TEXAS Grant I Program) is the larger of the two programs by far. The fiscal 2005 allocation was \$163 million but community college students only got \$16 million. To qualify, students must meet the following conditions (College for Texans, 2005a; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005a, b): (1) demonstrate financial need; (2) complete the "recommended or advanced high school program," (3) enroll in an eligible Texas college or university within 16 months of high school graduation or have received a first associate degree in May 2001 or later, and enroll in a higher level undergraduate program within 12 months of receiving an associate degree; and (4) be currently enrolled at least on a three-quarter time basis.

The Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program (formerly the TEXAS Grant II Program) is less restrictive but also much smaller. For fiscal year 2005, the total allocated was only \$4.8 million. The course load requirement is only half time rather than three-quarters time, the expected family contribution is lower (\$2,000 versus \$4,000), and there are no high school related requirements (College for Texans, 2005b; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005d, i).

Community colleges receive only a small portion of this need-based aid. In fiscal year 2005, while they got all of the very small Texas Educational Opportunity Grant funding, they received only 10% of the much larger TEXAS Grant funding. As a result, their share of the total for both grant funds was only 11% (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005c, d).

In addition to the above, the state has a very small First Generation College Student Grants Program, which began in 2003. With a grant from the federal government, the state Coordinating Board awards grants to 10 community college and 10 four-year colleges to give \$500 supplemental scholarships to first generation college students from Texas high schools with low college going rates. This is part of the state's Higher Education Assistance Pilot Program, authorized by HB 400 (2001) (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2003d, 2004b: 6; 2004e: 5).

Merit Aid

The state has several merit-based scholarship programs (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005). In addition, there is the Texas B-On-Time Loan forgiveness program (TEC 56.451). Student loans are forgiven if the student receives an undergraduate degree or certificate from an eligible institution, graduates with a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0 on a four-point scale, and does so within certain time limits. In the case of community colleges, it is within two calendar years after the date the student initially enrolled in a public two-year institution (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005e).

Other Programs

The state has, as we noted above, a tuition rebate program (TEC 54.0065) (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2004b: 6). Moreover, there is a prepaid guaranteed tuition program (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005f).

Aid for Special Populations

Part-Time Students. There is no dedicated program for part-time students, but they are eligible under the general state student aid programs. The Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program is open to students taking at least a half load (six credits). Meanwhile, the TEXAS Grant Program is open to students taking nine credits or more.

Undocumented Immigrants. Undocumented immigrants are eligible for state student aid under a 2001 act (HB 1403) if they have been state residents for three years, graduated from a Texas high school, and have signed an affidavit that they will apply for permanent residence as soon as they are eligible (Biswas, 2005; Schiller, 2001).

Noncredit Students. Students do not receive student aid if they are taking only noncredit courses. However, many noncredit programs are tuition free. Adult basic education (ABE) is funded through the Texas Education Agency and most ABE courses are free.

Welfare to Work Students. Former TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients can receive – through a pilot program – \$200 a month for one year to promote post-employment activities that support employment retention or advancement, so long as they remain employed at least 15 hours per week (Golonka & Matus-Grossman, 2001, p. 26). The Self Sufficiency job-training program has funds for adult TANF recipients.

Linking Aid to Tuition

The state requires colleges to put a portion of their tuition into what is called the Texas Public Education Grants, which are then awarded as need-based aid to students. It is a state mandate, but it is really a locally based “tuition set aside” (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2004b: 6).

Evaluations by Respondents

State officials have commented that the TEXAS Grant Program and Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program have been underfunded due to budget problems over the last four years. Budgetary outlays have not kept pace with enrollment increases, making it harder for students to receive funds. Also, the Texas Grant requirement that students graduate from an “approved” high school program and enroll in college within 16 months of high school graduation shuts out many community college students. As a result, they received only \$16 million out of the \$163 appropriated for fiscal year 2005 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005d). The Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program has no such restrictions but the fund is much smaller.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

A number of community college respondents noted the need to increase the state's funding of need-based aid and to equalize funding between TEXAS Grant and Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG) Programs. The community colleges will absorb the greatest number of students in coming years, most of whom will need financial aid, but they are much less likely to qualify for the large TEXAS Grant Program because it requires students to get a regular high school degree, enter college more or less directly, and attend more intensively.

A number of community college respondents also called for aid specifically for adult students who do not have a high school degree. Such students are numerous, need help, but do not qualify for state student aid. As one respondent stated, "They have very little support in coming back to the educational pipeline. Well they come back to us and if they don't have their GED, they don't qualify for financial aid." Another local community college official noted the need for financial aid for students "who do not have a GED in Spanish or English [and therefore] do not qualify for Pell grants and therefore have to fund their own way basically until they get to that level....In addition, ABE funding should be made available for Spanish GEDs rather than just English GEDs."

Outreach to Potential Students**Current Policy**

Texas has a wide variety of programs designed to ease the movement of students between high school and college. The Lumina-funded study of Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success catalogs at least 14, ranging from early intervention programs and bridge programs to dual credit and advanced placement (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005). We focus on those that have the greatest applicability to minority and low-income students.

College Outreach

The state of Texas encourages in various ways connections between community colleges and high schools and their students for purposes of enhanced access.

In 2001, House Bill 400 (TEC 29.903) required the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to operate a Higher Education Assistance Pilot Program to help students from high schools in the bottom 10% of all Texas public high schools in college-going rates. The Coordinating Board runs College Enrollment Workshops in three areas (Dallas metroplex, greater Houston, and South Texas) that provide students and their parents with the opportunity to apply for admission to the local community colleges, apply for federal and state financial aid assistance, and register for college entrance examinations. Moreover, in over 40 high schools, the Board operates GO Centers that assist high school students and parents who need academic and financial aid information and encourage students to complete the Recommended High School Program (rather

than the minimum plan for the diploma) (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2002a, 2003d, e, 2004b: 4-5; 2004f: 5-7).

The Texas Education Agency operates a federally-funded GEAR UP Program called Texas Getting Academically Prepared (TGAP) that informs middle school and high school students and their parents about preparing for, applying to, and paying for college (Southern Regional Education Board, 2005: 18).

Dual-Credit Programs

In 1995, the Legislature passed legislation (SB 1352) to permit high school students to attend classes at community colleges and receive both high school and college credit. Among the intended benefits is to interest students in going to college. Because the state allows both high schools and colleges to get funding for the same student, high schools do not discourage students from taking such courses and community colleges can waive tuition. Students must meet the same requirements as college entrants who place out of remediation (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; Barron, 1999: 409; Education Commission of the States, 2001a; Southern Regional Education Board, 2005: 18). In 2003, legislation was passed (HB 415) allowing community colleges to waive tuition for dual-enrollment courses (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005). However, because of state funding cuts in the last couple of years, fewer community colleges grant tuition waivers than had previously been the case.

In the last legislative session, changes were also made to encourage colleges to offer vocational-technical courses on high school campuses.

Evaluations by Respondents

The many forms of state encouragement of outreach to high school students have borne fruit. Various interviewees noted that the state programs had encouraged them to reach out to minority and low-income students. One interviewee spoke of being “encouraged with words with the Closing the Gaps program and [the Coordinating Board] had some very impressive presentations to make. There were press conferences all across the state about a year or two ago.” Many institutions have interpreted the GO campaign as support for developing partnerships with predominantly poor or minority high schools. Some institutions are looking at ways to improve transportation options, and some are creating GO centers at area high schools.

In the case of dual credit, one interviewee stated that the change in state policy regarding dual credit has “done more for the relationship of the colleges...and the high schools than anything we’ve ever tried to do.” There has been a sharp increase in dual-credit enrollments. By allowing funding to go to both high schools and community colleges, competition between them is reduced, thus encouraging them to work together. A local community college official noted:

We are going in and offering lots of courses [at the high schools]. Plus our state has done a wonderful thing by giving us both the funding. They don't lose funding, we don't lose funding. We both get funding and we can do deals with the high schools. For instance [for] the high schools that are in our district we offer those courses free of charge. We don't charge any tuition from them because we don't tax our own building and infrastructure for them, but we still get the same reimbursement that we can pay the instructor and administrative cost.

One institution created an early college high school that enables students to begin taking colleges courses their junior year of high school and then they can stay a fifth year at no cost to enable students to graduate with a high school diploma and an associate degree. They can do it in five years rather than six and can do it all free of charge.

One reason that dual-credit programs have taken off is that the state's community colleges have faced rising enrollments without a commensurate increase in funding. When asked whether his school has encountered space problems as a result of increasing enrollments, one president replied, "Not yet, and that's why we're doing such things as –we've gotten very aggressive with dual credit so that more students can take their course work at the high school. And our distance delivered education has increased this past year by 27%...And that's why we're teaching courses on the [senior college] campus...we just use each other's facilities...we're trying to leverage each other's resources."

Comprehensive Curriculum

One of the ways that minority and low-income students are welcomed into the community college is through programs that are not exclusively academic, including occupational education, adult education, English as a second language, and welfare to work training.

Current Policy

Occupational Education

State law (Education Code 130.003(e)) provides that one of the purposes of the community college shall be to provide: (1) Technical programs up to two years in length leading to associate degrees or certificates. (2) Vocational programs leading directly to employment in semi-skilled and skilled occupations (Barron, 1999: 407).

Adult Basic Education

State law (Education Code 130.003(e)) states that one of the purposes of the community college is to provide adult literacy and other basic skills programs for adults (Barron, 1999: 408). Adult basic education (ABE) funding goes to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the state's education department. However, community colleges make up 27 of the 54 fiscal agents receiving funds from TEA to provide adult basic education, and 43 community colleges actually do provide it. In fact, community colleges can contract with K-12 fiscal agents to provide ABE. The Texas Workforce Commission funds some English as a second language through its Skills Development Fund, and its Self-Sufficiency Fund is geared towards previous TANF recipients (Golonka & Matus-Grossman, 2001: 36).

Evaluations by Respondents

Though community colleges do work extensively with the Texas Education Agency to provide ABE, there is still criticism. A local community college official argued:

Adult Basic Ed unfortunately is so fragmented because in Texas at least it runs through the Texas Education Agency, which then goes to the public schools and the unfortunate thing is that is not their area of expertise, working with adults. And therefore in all honesty and candor, and I would guess you would probably hear it from even superintendents here – they probably don't utilize it to its best intent. You know it's used on some feel good type programs but the individual doesn't make major progress towards learning a language or gaining a skill towards employment.

Moreover, another observer noted that the state spends too little on adult education: "The state of Texas is pathetic. We are probably at the bottom in terms of money that we devote to adult education...for whatever reason Texas hasn't recognized that's a population out there that is probably the most neglected...I think the estimate for Texas is currently 1/4 of the population is functionally illiterate. They don't even have high school skills. We have got to have policy that recognizes this portion of the population...bring them back into education and get them up to speed to at least get the kinds of skills necessary to get decent paying jobs." This observer noted a lack of financial resources for these students, including student aid, and the lack of sufficient facilities to provide courses for this population.

Moreover, state ABE policies suffer from the fact that they only fund English GEDs, so that a significant portion of the population is unable to benefit. ABE funding cannot be used for Spanish GED training.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

One interviewee felt that the state needs to put more resources into adult education, because of the large number of high school dropouts. Another interviewee recommended that ABE funding

should be made available for Spanish GEDs as well as English GEDs. And another official noted: “I think there needs to be a...type of...program... specifically targeted on literacy regardless of language, so that we can assist those students who for one reason or another, have not completed a high school education. Whether it’s because they have migrated into the United States without or whether they dropped out, whatever the reason is we have a large population that are not literate in either language.”

Convenient Access

Especially for working adults, access to the community college is greatly aided if community colleges reach out through nontraditional schedules, dispersed locations, and distance education.

Current Policy

There are no specific state policies funding or regulating what the community colleges do in terms of convenient access, whether convenient class scheduling (nights and evenings), extension facilities, or short courses (in programs other than workforce courses). As a local community college official put it, “There is no incentive as far as state funding for doing that [addressing access through convenience] although it sounds like a good idea to me.”

Distance education students do generate the same per FTE state funding as on campus students (Education Commission of the States, 2000: 42). The state maintains a website providing potential students a list of distance education courses available statewide (www.texasdistanceeducation.com). At one point there was a Texas Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund, based on taxing the communication industry, that enabled all the community colleges and high schools to be connected to the internet.

The Texas Association of Community Colleges also runs a Virtual College of Texas, allowing colleges to offer their students distance education courses being offered by other community colleges. This effort does receive some funds from the state (Texas Association of Community Colleges, 2005).

Evaluations by Respondents

One local community college official noted that the impact of no state support for the development of outreach centers is that the colleges must charge students more in tuition and fees at such centers.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

One local community college official argued that there needs to be greater support to provide public transportation to students, particularly in rural areas where even multiple outreach sites still are not in easy reach of many students.

SUCCESS POLICIES

Public Commitment to Increasing Success

The second goal of the Closing the Gaps initiative has been by 2015 to increase by 50 percent the number of degrees, certificates and other identifiable student successes from high quality programs (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000).

The strategies by which Goal 2 is to be achieved, as they relate to community colleges, include the following:

- “carry out the state’s Uniform Recruitment and Retention Strategy and other efforts aimed at making college and university enrollment and graduation reflect the population of Texas”;
- “fund colleges and universities to reward increases in retention and graduation from high quality programs”; and
- “create incentives and requirements for seamless student transitions among high schools, community and technical colleges, universities and health-related institutions.”

These goals and strategies also have related benchmarks, by which the state can judge its progress towards its goals:

- Increase the number of students completing an associate degree from 23,000 to 26,000 by 2005, to 30,000 by 2010, and to 34,600 by 2015.
- Increase the number of Black students completing either a bachelor’s degree, associate degree, or certificate from 9,000 to 11,000 by 2005, to 14,000 by 2010, and to 16,000 by 2015.
- Increase the number of Hispanic students completing bachelor’s degrees, associate’s degrees and certificates from 18,000 to 26,000 by 2005; to 36,000 by 2010; and to 50,000 by 2015.

Texas is well over its 2005 target for associate degrees but is behind its target for baccalaureate degrees. The success on the first is attributable to the fact that community colleges have sought

out students who had completed the requirements for the associate degree but had not completed the paperwork. One reasons for the lag in baccalaureate attainment is inadequate transfer rates.

Below we examine the following state policies affecting success in the community college: remediation, academic counseling and guidance, non-academic guidance and support, transfer assistance, baccalaureate provision, noncredit to credit articulation, and workforce and economic development.

Remediation

The state's involvement in remediation (or developmental education) policy goes back to 1987, when the legislature mandated the development and implementation of a program to test the basic skills of all incoming freshman students at all public colleges and universities. Beginning in 1989, every student taking courses at public institutions was required to take the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test before completing nine hours of college-level course work. And by 1998, students had to be assessed even before initial enrollment (Barron, 1999: 409, 413).

Current Policy

We examine here the state's new developmental education program – the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) – which succeeded the TASP (Texas Academic Skills Program) under SB 286 passed in June 2003. While this policy is not directed specifically at minority or low-income students, it has a major impact on them, given the disproportionate numbers of minority and low-income students requiring remedial education.

Under this head, we examine several different features of state policy that might affect the extent, quality, and impact of community college remediation efforts: financing, testing upon entry to college, assignment to remediation, opportunity to take non-remedial courses, student eligibility for financial aid, content of remediation, exiting from remediation, and reducing the need for remediation.

Financing

The state provides funds for remedial education via the regular FTE enrollment system. Remedial English is reimbursed at the same level as College English and remedial math at the same level as General Math. However, there is discussion going on among the Coordinating Board's Formula Advisory Committee about whether remedial courses should get higher funding and whether that funding should be focused on student success (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2002c; idem, 2004c: 4).

There is a limit of 27 credit hours for community colleges (but 18 for university students) on how much remedial education the state will fund. If a student is still not proficient after 27 hours, the state will no longer provide funding (that is, the community college cannot report the student for FTE funding). Until recently, the student could not be charged for the difference; the college itself had to make up the loss of state funding.⁶ However, under SB 532 (2005), the Legislature authorized community colleges to charge higher tuitions: “The governing board [of a community college] may set a different tuition rate for each program, course, or course level offered by the college...as the governing board considers appropriate to reflect course costs or to promote efficiency or another rational purpose.”

Between 1999 and 2003, the state operated a small program that rewarded colleges for students who successfully graduated from remedial education. A total of \$250 thousand was allocated per year in FY 2000, 2001, 2002. The state paid a small amount for every student who successfully graduated from remediation by passing the TASP test within two years of beginning remediation (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2002d; Vickers, 2003).

Testing upon College Entry

By state law (sec. 51.3062, part b), colleges must test every student upon entry to “determine the student’s readiness to enroll in freshman-level academic coursework.” However, students who have attained certain minimum scores on the high school exit exam (the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skill) or the SAT and ACT are exempt. About 8-12% of students are exempted (Perin, in press; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2004b).

Colleges are allowed to choose their entrance exam from among four tests (the Texas Higher Education Assessment, Accuplacer, COMPASS, and ASSET), but the state sets the minimum cut-off scores. However, a significant number of institutions (30% for math; 8% for reading, and 15% for writing) require higher passing scores. Students must pass the test before accumulating 60 semester credit hours (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002; Martinez, Snider, & Day, 2003; Prince, 2004; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2003b, 2004: 2; 2005c: 6).

Despite the requirement of mandatory testing upon entry, not all colleges test in all subjects every student who did not achieve a high enough score on the high school exit exam, SAT, or ACT. In a study of two community colleges in Texas, Perin (in press) found that one of them did not assess students’ writing skills.⁷

Assignment to Remediation

With the replacement of the TASP (Texas Academic Skills Program) by the TSI (Texas Success Initiative), students can now delay remediation courses and try to pass the test again the next semester. Moreover, colleges have discretion on whether students failing one or the other placement exam must take remediation. If a student is close to passing, the institution can talk

with the student to decide on the best course of action. As directed in Section 51.3062, part (I): “The institution of higher education may refer a student to developmental coursework as considered necessary by the institution to address a student’s deficiencies in the student’s readiness to perform freshman-level academic coursework...” In a survey by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 36 to 39% of community colleges report no longer requiring mandatory developmental education for students failing to pass the remedial assessment tests, a sharp increase from the figure reported in 2000. Moreover, a sizable number of community colleges (15-23%) no longer require mandatory advising for students who fail the placement exam. And community colleges have also moved to give students more freedom as to when they begin remediation (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005b: 7-10).

Opportunity to Take Non-Remedial Courses

Under TASP, the state barred students from taking non-remedial courses until they had completed remediation and the testing requirements. But with the advent of the TSI, students are no longer prohibited from taking other coursework concurrent with remedial courses. Colleges therefore can allow students to take college level courses in areas not requiring the skill in which they are being remediated. However, very few colleges allow students to take college level courses in the skill area in which they are receiving remediation (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2001, 2005b: 7).

Student Eligibility for Financial Aid

Texas does make remedial students eligible for aid. However, the state does not fund students who are taking adult basic education.

Content of Remediation

The state does not specify the content of remediation. However, the Coordinating Board does set the number of remedial courses an institution can offer. Community colleges can offer three levels of remediation, whereas four-year institutions can offer only two levels.

Exiting from Remediation

Under TSI, the community college is responsible for deciding when the student is college ready. This will then be indicated on the college transcript. They may require that they pass a certain test or pass a course with a certain grade or complete a certain developmental sequence with a certain grade level.

Reducing the Need for Remediation

Community colleges provide high schools with data regarding the number of their graduates requiring remediation (Martinez et al., 2003: 34; Southern Regional Education Board, 2005: 18).

Using state funding for developmental education, community colleges have begun to offer “student success courses” at high schools to discuss, among other things, preparing for college. The hope is that these courses will better prepare students for college.

Evaluations by Respondents

Since the state does not support or penalize an institution which provides a significant amount of remediation compared with an institution that does not, there can be significant variation among schools.

Our interviewees broadly agreed that discontinuing the requirement that students complete all their remediation before they could begin college level work has significantly affected student success. Rather than getting mired in remedial courses, students can participate in college level courses and therefore gain a sense of progress.

Several interviewees felt that the state hopes – by funding no more than 27 hours of remediation per student – to get institutions to pay more attention to what students really need. As a community college official noted,

It has caused some concern to be expressed; other people think it is reasonable that if you haven't completed your remediation in 27 hours maybe you need to consider doing something else. Likewise if you take the same course twice and are unable to pass. Actually we cannot charge them a higher tuition the third time even though we are not receiving any state aid. It really doesn't punish the student if they take the class a third time or a fourth time, but it will punish the college. So I guess the incentive is to make sure the second time they are enrolled in the course they would pass it hopefully. Then again, tracking, keeping up with the students and monitoring all of these different things is very costly.

But the 27-hour limit on state funding for courses can be problematic for colleges with a lot of students in need of the most remedial support, because the weakest remedial students may well require more than 27 hours of remediation. Moreover, a state community college official fears that community colleges may use the tuition deregulation authority granted by SB 532 (2005) to charge higher tuition for a remedial course taken the fourth time or more and that this shift may end up significantly hurting remedial students.

Providing financial aid for developmental courses, but not for adult basic education, can have a distortive impact on student choice. Because they need financial aid, students end up taking

developmental courses when they really belong in ABE, which begins at a lower level. A community college official noted that when talking to community colleges: “It came through loud and clear when we were talking about ABE that a lot of times, because of financial aid, students were taking courses they were not ready for in developmental ed.”

Academic Counseling and Guidance

Low-income and minority students are in particular need for effective academic and non-academic guidance and counseling (Grubb, 2001). What state policies are therefore in place to fund and direct such counseling?

Current Policy

Texas does not have a separate category for academic counseling and guidance in its funding formula for community colleges. It is included in the overall cost of delivering instruction. Moreover, there are no state standards for the form and content of such academic counseling.

Evaluations by Respondents

The fact that Texas does not have a separate budget line for counseling and guidance leaves institutions to decide on their own how much to invest in this area. Therefore spending on academic counseling and guidance can vary substantially among the institutions, and the support structures for students can therefore vary significantly. Not infrequently the result has been inadequate advising, according to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2004b: 9): “Students fail to get advising and colleges don’t always require it when a student is finished with state-mandated college preparatory programs. Colleges may have inadequate resources to provide enough advisors/counselors to serve all their students” (p. 9).

Non-Academic Guidance and Support

There are no state funds or guidelines specifically for nonacademic counseling. Institutions may implement such an initiative at their own discretion, drawing funds as they see fit out of the student services budget.

Transfer Assistance

Current Policy

Texas has made very extensive efforts to make transfer more friction free, including a transferable general education common core of courses, guaranteeing transfer for fields of study, and common course numbering. It also has a standing Transfer Issue Advisory Committee, which is responsible for identifying and resolving barriers to transfer (Education Commission of the States, 2001b; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2004b).

Student Aid

Texas does not have a separate student aid program for transfer students. Transfer students can qualify for the Texas Grant Program (College for Texans, 2005a; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2005a, c), but they are competing against students coming right out of high school.

Transfer Advising

Texas does not have a separate state funding stream for transfer advising by community colleges. Transfer advising is financed out of the regular formula-based funding for instruction. The state does not have regulations governing the form and content of transfer advising.

The state maintains an online advising system – the Texas General Education Core Web Center (<http://statecore.its.txstate.edu>) – for students wanting to find out which general education courses at their home institution fall under the general education core of another institution.

Transfer of Academic Associate Degrees

Texas does not have a policy of guaranteeing university admission and junior status for associate degree graduates except for those with an Associate of Arts in Teacher Education.

Occupational Education Transfer

The state mandated 60-credit Field of Study Curricula (see below) were not created with an aim of easing vocational transfer but rather transfer generally. However, almost all are in occupational fields, which should greatly aid occupational education transfer.

General Education Transfer

Texas has required colleges to define a 42-credit general education core curriculum that is guaranteed transfer. The Coordinating Board has identified specific areas (communications, mathematics, natural sciences, humanities and arts, and social and behavioral sciences) and the required number of credits for each, but it has not detailed specific courses. This approach by the state allows colleges to identify different courses as meeting the general education core. A student who meets the general education core at one school is guaranteed that that core will fully meet the general education requirements at another college even if the courses are not identical. The one exception is for a receiving college that has been allowed to define a core curriculum of more than 42 credits. If a student has not completed the full 42 credits, the completed credits are transferred and need not be repeated (Texas Education Code chap. 61.821-822; THECB Rules and Regulations 4.28) (Education Commission of the States, 2001b: 17; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2004b: 3).

Specific Major Modules

The state has developed several 60-credit transferable Field of Study Curricula in certain fields: engineering, engineering technology, music, nursing, business, communication, computer science, criminal justice, and education. Completion of one of these “field of study curricula” at a community college allows a student to completely fulfill the lower division requirements for the degree program into which the student is transferring at a public four-year college (Texas Education Code 61.823; THECB Rules and Regulations, chap. 4.32; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2002e, 2004b: 3; Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 2005).

Common Course Numbering

The state has a common course numbering system and a Lower Division Academic Course Manual which lists courses that are transferable among the public institutions (TEC 61.832). Common course numbering became statutory in 2003 but it had been used voluntarily by community colleges since 1973 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2002c, 2004b: 3)

Transfer Dispute Resolution

Students who receive notice that transfer credit for an academic course has been denied can dispute this determination with the receiving institution and, if not resolved, with the Higher Education Coordinating Board (TEC 61.826). However, few disputes reach the Board (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2004b: 3, 5).

Evaluations by Respondents

The state's efforts to make transfer more fluid received mixed evaluations from our interview respondents. One interviewee commented that the "forced articulation among community colleges and universities has done wonders...for transferability of students and student persistence as a result." However, another interviewee stated that there still are problems, since students still end up having to repeat courses at the four-year institutions. Also, an interviewee noted that the articulation policy that is currently in place addresses the full 60 transferable hours only in a few fields of study. There remain many fields of study which do not have a full 60 hours that are transferable. In such cases, community colleges are sometimes developing articulation agreements with local four-year colleges.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

One of our interviewees noted the need to develop more fields of study in which a full 60 hours of courses are transferable. In addition, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2004b) has suggested that it would be useful to "create financial incentives for public four-year institutions to accept technical credit" (p. 10).

Baccalaureate Provision

The Coordinating Board favors the expansion of community college baccalaureate programs and university centers over the creation of new universities.

Community colleges have been establishing university centers where universities offer upper division courses at the community colleges themselves (Meeks, 2005). However, the state provides no mandate or incentive for four-year colleges to do this.

In June 2003, the Legislature passed SB 286, which among other things requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to establish a pilot project to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of authorizing public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science and applied technology (Sec. 130.0012). The bill also requires the Coordinating Board to operate the pilot project at three public junior colleges, as determined by the Coordinating Board (Larose, 2003; Wertheimer, 2003).

Noncredit to Credit Articulation

We have contradictory information regarding whether the state of Texas encourages movement from noncredit to credit programs. One well-placed observer has said that it does encourage movement, while another has said it does not. Our conclusion is that the state does not encourage, but also does not oppose, such movement.

Workforce and Economic Development

State law (TEC 130.003(e)) provides that one of the purposes of the community college is to provide technical and vocational programs (Barron, 1999: 407). State law (19 TEC 9.123) also encourages the provision of contract training: “The Coordinating Board recognizes that to prepare a literate and trained workforce to be available for economic stability and development requires a true joint partnership between private and public sectors. Accordingly, the Coordinating Board encourages contractual agreements between institutions of higher education, business, industry, and other agencies.” The Texas Workforce Commission works with community colleges to provide a variety of these programs. It funds contract training through its Skills Development Fund (Golonka & Matus-Grossman, 2001: 36; Regional Technology Strategies, 1999: 87-96).

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

In 1997, the Legislature passed legislation directing community colleges to prepare an annual performance report (Barron, 1999: 410). Since then, the Information Access Initiative has required the Coordinating Board, the Texas Education Agency, and the State Board for Educator Certification to share and integrate data. The Texas PK-16 Public Education Information Resource (TPEIR) is the result of that initiative. Efforts have been made now and again to establish performance funding but they have failed.

Current Policy

Performance Indicators Used

Texas is in the process of implementing a new accountability system for its community colleges. However, Texas has long had a system of outcomes indicators collected under several different auspices. Texas has a performance budgeting system involving the Legislative Budget Board, to which the Higher Education Coordinating Board submits a unified budget request for all the community colleges, supported by data responding to the LBB performance measures (Texas Legislative Budget Board, 2002). In addition, Texas had a State-Level Institutional Effectiveness Process and an Annual Data Profile.

The new accountability measures and the Legislative Budget Bureau measures are presented in Appendix Table A1 below.

Data Collection Procedures

State regulations require institutions to submit an annual report that must include the standards that measure the success of students in meeting the academic requirements of the institution.

The state maintains an automated follow-up system that tracks community college entrants after they leave college (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

The Texas PK-16 Public Information Resource (TPEIR) aggregates data from the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the State Board for Educator Certification into one place (www.tpeir.org) (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2005).

Connection of Performance Measures to State Funding

Texas has no performance funding system, though efforts to develop one are likely to continue.⁸ In 2004-05, Governor Perry proposed that any new money to higher education, above that necessary for enrollment growth, should be allocated on the basis of this accountability system. However, this proposal did not get enacted, though there is some expectation this will occur in the future.

Texas has a performance budgeting system involving the Legislative Budget Board (LBB), composed of 14 representatives and senators. The LBB reviews all funding requests before they go to the House and Senate. The Higher Education Coordinating Board submits a unified budget request for all the community colleges, supported by data responding to the LBB performance measures. While the data are broken down by college, the LBB has focused on the performance of the system as a whole rather than of individual colleges (Texas Legislative Budget Bureau,

2002). Perhaps because of this, there is little evidence that the performance of community colleges affects their legislative appropriation. A community college official stated: “LBB has performance measures which are collected every November and reported to the Legislature. I don’t know the statement that Texas has a performance budgeting system involving the Legislative Budgeting Board is accurate. I think they have performance measures in place and they include performance measures in the bill patterns of most agencies. But they don’t do that in the bill pattern for community colleges....From where I sit, I don’t think they have a performance budgeting system for community colleges. [Interviewer: They may look at the measures but there is no evidence it affects the final appropriations?] Right.”

Evaluations by Respondents

Use of Data by State Officials to Craft State Policy

The extent to which performance data are actually used by state officials to craft state access and success policy is not entirely clear. To be sure, several interviewees felt that performance data led state officials to launch the Coordinating Board’s Closing the Gaps initiative. However, others hold that the state is not using the performance data. When asked how data from the state’s performance accountability system influences state policy, a local community college official replied: “I don’t think it is used at all....I don’t think it is used at a state level. Certainly reports are completed, but there are no consequences attached to those reports.” It is these discrepancies that indicate the need for a sustained analysis of how precisely state officials actually use the data they collect.

In addition, there are limits to the degree to which state officials can use the data, even if they want to. As one observer noted, the data system maintained by the Coordinating Board are “based on a data system that was designed purely for funding accountability, so they lack basic variables like credits completed in their term records and they have no transcript-level detail. The data on remediation is based entirely on the CBM002 record which was designed for TASP and has never been modified, so it is impossible for the state to conduct detailed evaluation studies of things like the effectiveness of placement or remediation policies.”

Use by Local Community College Officials

There are mixed reports on the extent to which community colleges themselves are using data on their own performance. Some community college presidents raised questions about how much their colleges were really attending to state data. One president stated:

I am not aware of any impact that the data have had on our institution. It could be the people that are more directly related with the different occupational programs and workforce programs. They may get the data back and take a look at it and decide on some changes that may need to be made in their programs, but I have not heard of them using the data that way. Maybe at some point down the line they will, but I haven't heard about it....As far as I know the statewide data hasn't been that helpful. It doesn't mean that it couldn't be, but it just hasn't been.

This statement was echoed by the president and director of institutional research at another college.

However, state officials told us that outcomes data did influence the community colleges:

What Closing the Gaps has done is cause all of the institutions to look at their current processes. We've had community colleges that charge a fee to file for graduation. They are now not doing that in some cases. They are looking back at students who've accumulated more than 70 hours to see if they can't award degrees or certificates to those students, their completers just never filed for the actual award. We have a real focus on counseling and advising for the first time because trying to connect with the students has become an issue everywhere.

Another state official stated that the state got constant feedback from local community college officials – particularly institutional researchers – and that they used outcomes data in planning and program development. This same official queried the members of the Texas Association for Institutional Research about what state reports they used and received many responses, which we were shown. Most of these responses indicated substantial use of state data.

Our conclusion is that the state data have affected the community colleges but in ways that presidents may not be entirely aware of or willing to acknowledge.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Texas has been notable for the degree of its policy activism with regard to community colleges. It is just behind Florida in the extent of its activity across the various domains we have charted. Texas has also been distinctive for certain foci. It has been the Achieving the Dream (AtD) state that has most directly addressed the issues of racial-ethnic inequality in access and success. It has made specific and public commitments to improving access and success by race-ethnicity in its Closing the Gaps initiative. Texas has also been one of the first states (and one of only two AtD states) to extend to undocumented students guarantees of access to college, in-state tuition, and eligibility for state student aid.

Texas is also distinctive in that, having heavily regulated remediation under TASP, it then pulled back significantly the degree of regulation under TSI. It let colleges have much more discretion over whether students who failed the placement test were required to enter remediation and over when students were deemed ready to leave remediation. The typical pattern found in other states has been a unilinear movement toward more state regulation of remediation.

Despite the prominence of the state's Closing the Gaps initiative, it is not without criticism. First, although the initiative has focused great attention on the racial-ethnic gap in access and success, it has not given enough recognition to the social class gap. To be sure, the *Closing the Gaps* report states: "Economically disadvantaged students represent an increasing proportion of the state's traditional college-age population and should be considered a high priority for gift aid" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000. p. 12). Still, as we have seen above, the CTG goals are focused on racial inequality. Second, while the initiative has certainly been successful in improving awareness about racial inequalities in access and success, there has been a question about how much real financial commitment the state has made to rectifying those inequalities. Although CTG proposed an increase of 300,000 students in higher education, 70% of which are expected to attend community colleges, there has been no funding increase associated with the program. This has left the community colleges to look for other sources of revenue, including – ironically – raising their tuition and fees.

As with the other Achieving the Dream states, there are areas where Texas may wish to consider further policymaking with respect to the community colleges. They include student aid, aid for adult basic education, academic and nonacademic counseling, some aspects of transfer, and noncredit to credit articulation. Furthermore, Texas may wish to add to its already extensive efforts with regard to performance accountability.

In the area of student aid, several commentators have noted the need to make more aid available to community college students. Many such students are excluded from eligibility for the large TEXAS Grant Program because of certain restrictions, particularly that students must have finished a high school program (many adults, particularly immigrants, have not) and that students must enter higher education within 16 months of finishing high school (this provision excludes most adults). One of the easiest ways of addressing this problem would be to sharply increase the funding in Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program, which is less restrictive than TEXAS Grant Program but also much smaller. In addition, the state may wish to consider creating a state fund specifically for part-time students, who make up such a large portion of community college students.

The funding for adult basic education (ABE) may also bear examination. Several of our interviewees argued that more money is needed, particularly for getting a Spanish GED, and they questioned having funding for community colleges ABE go through the Texas Education Agency rather than the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Moreover, the exclusion of ABE students from eligibility for student aid should be rethought, since it forces many into remediation education courses (for which they can get aid), rather than more appropriate ABE.

Like other Achieving the Dream states, Texas does not provide any dedicated state funding or standards for academic, non-academic, and transfer counseling at the community colleges. Yet, it

is clear that good counseling – especially if it does not entail preconceived ideas of what jobs less advantaged students are destined for – can play an important role in expanding opportunity. The lack of dedicated funding and state standards leaves it at the mercy of the vicissitudes of community college funding and the belief that counseling is a frill that can be done on the cheap when other demands are heard.

While Texas has well developed state policy support for transfer, it may well wish to consider some additions. Besides funds and standards for transfer advising at the colleges (see above), the state should consider following Florida and North Carolina in guaranteeing that such students will receive admission to at least one of the public universities and that, whichever one they enter, they will have junior status. Moreover, the state may well wish to consider establishing a state aid program specifically for transfer students, since their needs are different from those of students just entering college.

Also like the other AtD states, Texas does very little at the state level to facilitate student movement from noncredit to credit programs. This type of transfer is particularly important for minority and low-income students who often enter the community college through the noncredit side.

Finally, though Texas collects a wide variety of performance measures, it may wish to consider adding one for post-transfer success and for noncredit to credit transfer. With regard to post-transfer success, Texas could follow Florida and North Carolina in measuring how many transfer students (especially those who secured an associate degree at the community college) achieve a certain GPA (whether a 2.0 or 2.5) after a certain period at university. Also, while Texas has made notable efforts to support the institutional research capacity of community colleges, this may still be an area deserving further attention in the form of funding and training, directed particularly to under-resourced colleges.

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ENDNOTES

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² There are also three technical colleges and three public lower-division institutions (Barron, 1999: 407).

³ These figures are for the entire population, not just for high school graduates or the traditional college-age cohort.

⁴ The estimated average nonresident tuition and required fees in 2005-06 were \$3,286 (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 10).

⁵ It was reported to us that some large urban community college districts had been quietly charging undocumented immigrants instate tuition even before doing so was mandated. However, to avoid violating the law, they had not included such students in their counts to the state for enrollment-based state appropriations.

⁶ The Legislature had thought that this limit would make the colleges work more effectively. However, the provision can disadvantage community colleges that have a lot of students who are far behind.

⁷ This study is based on the Community College Research Center's National Field Study of 15 community colleges in six states. Two of those colleges were in Texas.

⁸ The state did briefly have a performance funding system rewarding remedial education success that operated during fiscal years 1998 to 2003 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2002b, d).

APPENDIX TABLE A1

Texas Outcomes Measures

| Measure | Reported to Public | | |
|--|--------------------|---------|-----------|
| | By CC | By race | By SES |
| ACCESS MEASURES | | | |
| Enrollments: Overall credit students (headcount, FTE) (CBM001) | PR | PR | PR (Pell) |
| Enrollments: Continuing education (FTE) (CBM00A) | PR | PR | |
| Enrollment: Credential seeking students: overall and first-time in college (CBM001) | PR | PR | |
| Semester credit hours (CBM001) | PR | | |
| Contact hours: Continuing education (CBM00A) | PR | | |
| Proportion of entrants who are minority or economically disadvantaged (LBB explanatory 1-3) | LBB | LBB | LBB |
| SUCCESS MEASURES | | | |
| Retention: Retention from fall to fall (for one year and two years): First-time, full-time, credential seeking students (CBM001, 002) | PR | PR | |
| Course completion: Percentage of contact hours completed (LBB outcome 1) | LBB | | |
| Remedial success: Percentage of development education students who pass TASP test within two years (LBB outcome 4) | LBB | | |
| Graduation: Number overall (CBM009; LBB Output 1) | PR LBB | PR | |
| Graduation: Number of Associate of Arts in Teaching (CBM009) | PR | PR | |
| Graduation: Number for computer science and engineering technology, nursing and allied health (CBM009) | PR | | |
| Graduation: Rate after 3, 4, 6 years for first-time, full-time credential seeking (CBM001, 002, 009) | PR | PR | |
| Graduation and persistence: After six years, rate of graduation or still enrolled for first-time, full-time credential seeking students (CBM001, 002, 009) | PR | PR | |
| Completers/Other successes: Number of marketable skills award completers (CBM00M) | PR | PR | |
| Transfers: Number (LBB outcome 3) | LBB | LBB | |
| Transfers: Percent of associate degree graduates enrolled in a Texas senior institution within one year of graduation (PR Automated Student and Adult Learner Follow-up and CB116) | | | |
| Transfers: Percent who transfer to senior institution with at least 30 semester credit hours (CBM001) | PR | | |
| Job placement: Percentage of graduates employed in Texas within one year of graduation (PR Automated Student and Adult Learner Follow-up and CB116) | PR | PR | |
| Job placement: Percentage of graduates employed or enrolled in senior institution within one year of graduation (PR Automated Student & Adult Learner Follow-up and CB116) | PR | PR | |
| Licensure exam passage: Percentage of students in a discipline requiring external certification or licensure who pass a licensure or certification exam (LBB outcome 5) | LBB | | |
| Licensure (certification exam) passage rates for teacher education students (LBB) | LBB | LBB | |

Sources:

PR: Texas Online Accountability System (www.theccb.state.tx.us/InteractiveTools/Accountability)

LBB: Legislative Budget Board Performance Measures (most are collected by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)

CHAPTER SIX

VIRGINIA¹

When the Virginia Community College System first appeared in 1966, it consisted of only two technical institutes (Bassett, 1997). Today, the system includes 23 institutions, enrolling over a third of all Virginia college students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003; Virginia Community College System, 2004b).

Despite this impressive growth, the community colleges still seem to be somewhat overlooked within the state. The state universities command so much attention and loyalty, leaving less room for attention to the community colleges. A state legislative staff member noted: “Most of the time when the state is setting policy it is for something systemwide... Virginia legislators know more about the four-year institutions than they do about their two-year institutions. That is surprising given that every legislator has a community college in their district...it is sort of benign neglect.” However, this may be changing. The community college system played a significant role in the passage of the 2004 Higher Education Restructuring Act. And that act, by making transfer articulation an accountability measure for the universities, has led them to pay more attention to the community colleges.

Below we describe the state context: the size and composition of the state population, the nature of its economy, the structure of the community college system, its governance and finance, and the enrollment demands facing it. We then describe the state’s policies affecting access to and success in the community college for minority and low-income students. As we go along, we note the evaluations of those policies by various political actors whom we interviewed and the policy proposals they made.

This report is the product of intensive interviews and analysis of documents. We interviewed officials of the Virginia Community College System, state legislators and staff, gubernatorial advisors, top officials of four community colleges, and heads of local community-based organizations representing African Americans and Latinos. The four community colleges represented different types – urban, suburban, and small town – located in north, central, south, and west Virginia. The documents analyzed included materials by Virginia state agencies and by external organizations such as the Education Commission of the States and the Southern Regional Education Board.

THE STATE CONTEXT

Population Size and Composition

Approximately 7.4 million people resided in Virginia in 2003, making the state the twelfth most populous in the nation. In that year, 74% of the population identified itself racially as white; 20%, Black/African American; 4%, Asian or Pacific Islander; less than 1%, American Indian; and 1%, two or more races. Meanwhile, 5% identified ethnically as Hispanic or Latino; these individuals can be of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). The Latino population is growing rapidly, particularly in northern and southwestern Virginia.

Between 2001-02 and 2013-14, the composition of public high school graduates in Virginia is expected to change considerably. The income background of high school graduates is not expected to change much, but the racial-ethnic composition will. The minority share of high-school graduates is projected to rise from 33 percent in 2001-02 to 47 percent in 2013-14, with Hispanics accounting for the bulk of this increase. However, Asian and Pacific Islanders will emerge as a significant share of public high school graduates as well (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003).

Economic Structure

Virginia is a prosperous state. The state's gross state product in 2004 was \$326.6 billion, thirteenth largest in the nation. The state per capita personal income in 2004 was tenth highest in the nation, at \$35,477 in 2004. And the state's poverty rate averaged 10% over the years 2002-2003, substantially below the national average of 12.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004; U.S. Department of Commerce, 2005a, b).

Nature of the Community College System

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) comprises 23 comprehensive community colleges located on 40 campuses throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. These colleges enrolled 228,936 students in 2003-04 (Virginia Community College System, 2004b). The community colleges accounted for 44% of total credit enrollments in Virginia institutions of higher education in 2001 (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 13).

Governance and Finance

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is led by a chancellor who is the chief executive officer and subject to the coordinating powers of the State Board for Community Colleges. The State Board has responsibility for governing the community colleges that comprise the system. There are local advisory boards appointed by local government bodies, but their powers are delegated by the State Board (Graham, 1999; Virginia Community College System, 2005a).

State funding is provided on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis. In 2003-04, the state appropriation of \$280.5 million represented 44% of total community college revenues (Virginia Community College System, 2004a).

In 2004-05, the Virginia Community College System was appropriated \$303.4 million, sharply up from the year before (Illinois State University, 2005). In addition, a general obligation bond passed for about \$1 billion to build new facilities to accommodate 67,000 new students expected within higher education by 2010. The sharp increase in 2004-05 followed a few years of decreasing real (inflation adjusted) state funding (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003a). As a legislative staff member noted, “Most of the institutions were underfunded relative to the funding guidelines and the community colleges were really at the bottom of the list, so the money that was put into session was the first step of a sort of four to six year phase in to get the institutions back to adequate funding relative to the guidelines.”

One imponderable facing the community college system is the stance of the next governor. Governor Mark Warner had been very supportive of education generally and community colleges specifically.

Enrollment Demands

Between 2001-02 and 2017-18, the number of public high school graduates in Virginia is expected to increase by 18% (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003). The Education Commission of the States has estimated that Virginia has to increase its postsecondary enrollments by 60% (nearly 270 thousand more students) between 2000 and 2015 if it is to match the performance of the best-performing (“benchmark”) states (Education Commission of the States, 2003).

ACCESS POLICIES

Public Commitment to Increasing Access

Indications of a state policy commitment to access for all Virginians can be found in statements by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). The State Council states that it is committed to provide access to “historically underserved populations” (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b).

Meanwhile, in its master plan, *Dateline 2009*, the Virginia Community College System pledges: “By 2009, the VCCS will enroll 15,685 more students (9,709 annual FTE), in addition to the 14,559 already enrolled between 2000 and 2003. This will represent nearly two-thirds of the 47,400 more students who will be seeking higher education in Virginia between 2000 and 2009.” Moreover, the System adds: “[T]he cost to attend a Virginia community college will not exceed 50 percent of the average cost to attend a Virginia public four-year college or university” (Virginia Community College System, 2003a, p. 4-5). Since then, each community college has been asked to post on the VCCS website their particular yearly goals that would advance the *Dateline 2009* systemic goals (Virginia Community College System, 2005f).

Other signs of a broad commitment to access can be seen in the way that community college officials see their colleges as the “on ramp” to education. As a community college president noted, their “cost is way below those of any state supported institution and certainly below private institutions in the state of Virginia. The cost is there; physical access is there; the community colleges have been placed with 23 across the state of Virginia. The theory was that there’d be no student who’d have to drive more than about an hour to get to a community college campus. It didn’t work out quite that way, but it is pretty doggone close.”

However, there are few examples of clear commitments to specific underserved populations, particularly those demarcated by race or income. As a local community college official noted, while access for minority and low-income students is “something we are all concerned about...I don’t see any initiatives specifically directed at minority or low-income students.” In fact, in *Dateline 2009* (2003a), the Virginia Community College System does not mention equalizing disparities by race or income in access to the community college. Further, when asked about a public commitment by the state to these groups, a state community college official said: “the only thing that we could come up with there is a longstanding commission at the state levels that looks at minority issues but that’s it. There is nothing. There really isn’t legislation. There isn’t an explicit policy goal. There aren’t any public statements by a key figure.” As a state legislative official noted, “I don’t think Virginia fits into a category saying we have this specific initiative aimed at low-income or minority students...the vocabulary in Virginia doesn’t tend to focus around low income and minority.”

This inattention to income and race seems to stem from two sources. First, many people do not seem to see access as a major problem. When asked about whether access is seen as an issue in the legislature, a state legislator replied: “It [is] not, not here in Virginia to my knowledge. Especially in my area, we have a very high enrollment of minority students.”

Regarding low-income students, the same interviewee stated: “I don’t see...any lack of participation due to financial resources.” When asked why there are few or no state policies directed toward minority or low-income students, a local community college official replied “I really don’t know if there is a reason why. Other than maybe it isn’t considered to be a significant problem.”² Secondly, a number of interviewees said that the policy discourse in Virginia tends to avoid talking about specific population groups – particularly those defined by race or class – and instead focuses on the population as a whole. This avoidance reflects in good part the continuation of considerable racial and class tension in Virginia. For example, in response to questions about undocumented immigrants, a state official noted ironically: “[W]e are in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Come on guys. Where we had a member of the General Assembly in the session say you need to put them back on the boat and send them back home.” Another interviewee spoke of hearing affluent whites ask about who would do the menial jobs like housekeeping and landscaping if everyone has a college education.

Below we review specific state policies that encourage community colleges to provide access for minority and low-income students. Some of them are specifically addressed to such students. But many – while helping minority and low-income students – are not specifically directed to them. We focus specifically on these policies: open door admissions, tuition, student aid, outreach to potential students, a comprehensive curriculum, and convenient access.

Open Door Admissions

A key form of access to higher education for minority and low-income students is the community college with its open door mission, and Virginia is no exception.

Current Policy

The community colleges require neither a high school diploma nor a GED for entrance. The Policy Manual of the Virginia Community College System states:

Eligible for general admission to the community college are persons who are high school graduates, or the equivalent, or who are at least eighteen years of age, and are in any case able to benefit from a program at the community college. Other persons may apply to the admissions committee of the community college for special consideration for admittance to the community college. (Virginia Community College System, 2005a, p. 2A-6)

We found no evidence of caps or restrictions on enrollments. However, it is also clear that because of insufficient state aid, community colleges have not always been able to offer as many sections as they would like (Futures Project, 2004).

The state does not guarantee access to undocumented immigrants. In fact, in 2002, the state Attorney General issued an opinion that public colleges and universities should not admit undocumented students. And in 2005, a bill was introduced in the Legislature – though it failed

in the Senate – to ban the enrollment of undocumented immigrants. While many community colleges have followed the Attorney General’s opinion, others have chosen to admit undocumented students (Biswas, 2005; Martz, 2002; Miller, 2005).

Tuition

Current Policy

The average resident tuition and required fees for Virginia community college students in 2005-06 were \$2,135, which was the 20th lowest in the nation (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 9).³ The estimated total net cost of attending a Virginia community college (tuition, room, and board minus student aid) in 2004 represented on average 29% of the median family income of the bottom 40% of the population in income; this put Virginia at much the same level as the other first round Achieving the Dream states except Florida, which was higher (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004a: 9, 13; idem, 2004b).

Tuition is set by the State Community College Board, and community colleges are not allowed to set different rates. However, community colleges can vary in their fees if they have the permission of the State Board (Virginia Community College System, 2005a).

Keeping Down Tuition

Virginia has tried to keep tuition affordable. According to a state official, “our tuition levels are still below the national average and we make sure we’ve made a commitment on price here. Our price to attend will never, at least in our strategic plan, exceed one half the average price it costs to attend a four-year college” (see above). Another state official commented: “we’ll try to hold down tuition as well as we can. We had an increase this past year and probably next year a slight increase.... but the percentage increase in community college tuition has been relatively small.” But despite this clear commitment to keeping down tuition, it is not inscribed in law.

Tuition Charged Undocumented Immigrants

Undocumented immigrants are barred from eligibility for instate tuition. The state Attorney General issued an opinion in 2002 that students without immigration documentation should not be admitted and, if they are admitted, they should pay out-of-state tuition. Some of the larger community colleges near Washington, DC, such as Northern Virginia Community College, have been admitting undocumented students, but the students are still required to pay out-of-state tuition. Strikingly, in 2003, the State Legislature went so far as to pass a bill (HB 2339) – subsequently vetoed by the governor – to ban any individual illegally in the U.S. from being eligible for instate tuition rates or any other postsecondary benefit (Biswas, 2005; Martz, 2002; Melton, 2003). It seems as if this issue will reappear in the 2006 General Assembly. Del. Jack

Reid, R-Henrico, has announced plans to introduce a measure to deny instate tuition to undocumented immigrants (Sampson, 2005b).

Student Aid

Current Policy

Three quarters of the state's student aid spending takes the form of grants, with 58% in the form of need-based grants, which puts Virginia second among the five first-round Achieving the Dream states and close to the national average of 62%. This proportion is a sharp increase from the year before (National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, 2005: 8).

Need-Based Aid

The state has three main need-based programs: the College Scholarship Assistance Program (CSAP), the Virginia Commonwealth Award Program (VCAP), and the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program (VGAP). For all three awards, students must meet the following conditions: (1) be admitted into a Virginia public two- or four-year college or university,⁴ (2) be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, (3) be a domiciliary resident of Virginia, and (4) demonstrate financial need as determined by the institution. However, where the CSAP and VCAP only require at least half-time attendance, the VGAP requires full-time attendance. Moreover, the VGAP requires that students have graduated from a Virginia high school (GED holders and home-schooled students are not eligible) and have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA. The CSAP award can range between \$400 and \$5,000, but the VCAP and VGAP award limit are not set, though they cannot exceed tuition and required fees (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2005c, d, e).

The state began providing need-based student aid to community college students only in the early 1990s. As a state official noted, "for a long time the assumption was they [the community colleges] were so relatively low-cost that their students shouldn't need financial aid."

A few interviewees mentioned the money coming from settlement of the state and federal suits against the tobacco companies. Community colleges in the tobacco producing areas are getting money from the settlement to provide need-based scholarships for individuals in tobacco producing families.

The community college system has played a role in creating new sources of funding, independent of other state support. "We also have our own program...we take an amount right off the top that is used for student aid programs and then that is distributed to each one of the colleges again by a formula used in the system office." The state is also encouraging community colleges to develop their own aid resources.

Aid for Special Populations

Part-Time Students. Virginia has an aid program specifically for part-time students. Developed by the Chancellor at the system level, the Part-Time Assistance Program provides funds for students taking 3 to 5 credits. Also, students can qualify for the College Scholarship Assistance Program and the Virginia Commonwealth Award Program if enrolled at least half-time.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia describes the Part-Time Assistance Program as follows: “Students attending part-time (3-5 hrs.) in Virginia’s Community College System can receive grants up to the cost of tuition and fees. Recipients must be Virginia domiciled residents and demonstrate financial need” (State Council for Higher Education for Virginia, 2005a). As the Chancellor noted, “Instead of waiting for the state to give us a financial aid dollar we are also supplementing that by creating our own financial aid pools by taking it off the top of tuition increases. I just doubled that pot this year. I restricted [it] by the way, to part-time students who struggle the most not only on the tuition side, but on the academic side. Clearly financial aid is connected to those other important arrows such as retention, access, and graduation.” As a community college president noted, the money available for part-time students is “not huge, but we use every bit of it we can and often times if it is unused at other institutions we can get some of that money as well.”

Undocumented Immigrants. These students are not eligible for state student aid.

Linking Aid to Tuition Levels

The state has an informal policy of linking aid to tuition increases. According to a legislative official, “The state has the goal of meeting 50% of the student’s remaining need and that is defined as cost/attendance less any federal aid they may receive, less a family contribution, less any known scholarships....We are significantly below that goal right now, we are only about 35% statewide.”

Outreach to Potential Students

Current Policy

Early Intervention

There is strong encouragement for community colleges to reach out to high school students, although there is no explicit state policy or mandate. A state community college official noted: “I am not sure there are any things that we are mandated to do. However, under our current Governor’s leadership [then Mark Warner] we have been encouraged to do a number of things in terms of outreach to K-12...adult basic education...middle college....”

The state administers a federally-funded GEAR UP program (Southern Regional Education Board, 2005). In addition, there is a pilot program currently underway called “Education for a Lifetime” which addresses both high-performing students and students who need more help. For the latter there are partnerships with K-12 for “pathways to industry certification.” Also, the state provides access to the federal College Opportunities On-Line (COOL) program, which provides information to students and parents about colleges, paying for college, and so forth.

Dual Enrollment

Since 1988 Virginia has offered formal dual-enrollment programs. The state supports dual-enrollment by allowing community colleges to receive funding through their enrollment-based state funding and the public schools to do so through their Average Daily membership credits. The state encourages courses to be offered at no cost to the student, but final decisions about tuition and fees are left to the colleges (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; Education Commission of the States, 2000a, 2001). One community college president described the arrangement his college had worked out: “We are expanding our dual-enrollment significantly this year by restructuring the fees and tuition we are charging to our students. The school system is basically paying the tuition and we are reimbursing them parts of that cost of instruction and use of their facilities and so forth, but what we are trying to do is shift that burden of tuition from the students who don’t have financial aid in high school to the secondary schools.”

In 2004, the state began to strongly push dual-enrollment between high schools and colleges as part of Governor Warner’s Senior Year Initiative. The hope was to have college aspirants acquire at least a semester’s worth of college credit before graduating from high school. The governor signed an agreement with the community colleges and 39 four-year colleges (15 public and 24 private) stating that they would accept credits earned in high school through dual-enrollment and other means (advance placement and international baccalaureate). The four-year colleges agreed to accept up to 13 credits from courses taken in three subject areas: biology, U.S. history, and psychology. In addition, the public colleges agreed to accept even more credits in other subject

areas: English, economics, physics, math, art history, and music appreciation (Virginia Mentor, 2005).

One of the objectives of the state community college system's master plan, *Dateline 2009*, is to triple the number of students in dual-enrollment programs (Academic Pathways to Access and Student Success, 2005; Virginia Community College System, 2003a).

Comprehensive Curriculum

Many minority and low-income students are attracted into the community college not by college level academic curricula but by other kinds of programs such as adult basic education (ABE). To what degree is the provision of such curricula subject to state support or guidance?

Current Policy

Vocational Education

The state regulations governing the establishment of the community colleges require that they maintain a program of occupational education:

The occupational/technical education programs shall be designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semiprofessional workers, and skilled craftsmen for employment in industry, business, the professions, and government. These programs, which normally require two years or less of training beyond high school, may include preparation for agricultural, business, engineering, health and medical, industrial, service, and other technical and occupational fields. (Virginia Community College System, 2005a, p. 2A-4)

Adult Basic Education

Adult basic education is not a major community college offering. Funding goes to the State Department of Education. Community colleges get involved only if local school boards contract with them (Education Commission of the States, 2000a). As a state community college official noted,

If you are taking the federal definition of that we are really not involved in adult basic education. However, we are doing a pilot project that has been supported with some money by the Governor and it is something called the middle college, which is a different thrust that one you may be familiar with. Our middle college is for the student who is 18-24 without a high school diploma and what we do is put them in a

middle college program with very intense support and low staffing ratios. They attend full time and based on where they are in their learning patterns they may actually be taking preparation for the GED and at the same time they may actually be in a college level program. The intent is to get them that GED and continue them through the community college system. Other than that I wasn't sure what you meant by adult basic education.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

The state chancellor for community colleges is pushing to have most of adult basic education (ABE) shifted to the community colleges. However, the state department of education would keep ABE students under a certain age.

Convenient Access

Especially for working adults, access to the community college is greatly aided if community colleges reach out through nontraditional schedules, dispersed locations, and distance education.

Current Policy

There are no state policies supporting convenient access, except for some funding for distance education.

Distance education enrollments receive state funding through the same enrollment-based state funding mechanism as other enrollments (Education Commission of the States, 2000a; Virginia Community College System, 2004c). The Virginia Community College System operates a webpage where students can find out about online courses at the community colleges (www.so.cc.va.us/vccsonline/index.html). The Virginia General Assembly also funds the Teletechnet program, by which Old Dominion University offers upper-division courses at community colleges. The intent is to offer a four-year degree without students having to leave their home campus. The courses being offered are upper-division courses. Another interviewee referenced the state funds to:

provide distance learning opportunities through a major technology network infrastructure. We were very fortunate [distance learning] got funded and we've had ongoing funding from the general assembly every year to maintain that. So we have this high speed band that connects all of our community colleges that obviously costs money to keep that in place, plus replacement costs for the latest computers and that sort of thing. That we get each year, it is earmarked for technology infrastructure and we can use that to support our distance education offerings.

SUCCESS POLICIES

Public Commitment to Increasing Success

The Virginia community college system has made a clear commitment to improving the success of its students. In its strategic plan, *Dateline 2009*, the system pledges that “by 2009, the VCCS will rank in the top ten percent in the nation with regard to graduation rates, retention rates, [and] job placement rates.” Moreover, it will “triple the number of graduates who successfully transfer to four-year institutions” (Virginia Community College System, 2003a, p. 2).

However, it is not clear that there is as yet a strong commitment to improving success outside the state community college leadership. For example, a state legislative official noted: “the community colleges have in some ways been their own worst enemy here...by saying the mission of the community college is a complex mission and we don’t expect all of our students to necessarily succeed.... [They] sort of put so many qualifications around it that it is easy to look at the numbers and say that’s all right we wouldn’t expect things to look any different.”

Whatever the strength of commitment to improving student success, it is not stated specifically in terms of equalizing disparities by race and income. The *Dateline 2009* master plan does not mention either category. In fact, there is a strong tendency in the state’s policy discourse to refrain from discussing low-income or minority students specifically, but rather to focus on the population as a whole. This is evident in discussions about retention rates. While there is some concern about retention rates for minority students, the conversation turns quickly back to the Virginia population as a whole. For example, a state official argued: “Our records suggest our retention rate for minority students is not good, but our retention rate for students is not that great either, the general population. So that is one of our targeted goals in *Dateline 2009*.”

Below we examine the following state policies affecting success in the community college: remediation, academic guidance and support, non-academic guidance and support, transfer advising and support, baccalaureate provision, noncredit to credit articulation, and workforce preparation.

Remediation

Many minority and low-income students come into the community college inadequately prepared to do college level study. They therefore need remedial or developmental education. What does the state do to make sure such remediation is provided effectively? In the case of Virginia, community college remediation is of particular importance because the state discourages four-year colleges and universities from offering it (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002).

Current Policy

We examine several different features of remediation policy: financing, testing upon entry to college, assignment to remediation, opportunity to take non-remedial courses, student eligibility for financial aid, content of remediation, exiting from remediation, and reducing the need for remediation.

Financing

The state funds developmental education – as with any other credit-based course – through the enrollment-based funding formula.

Virginia will not provide state funding for remedial courses taken more than two times. However, a student can get permission from the Vice President for Academic Affairs at a community college to take a course for more than a second time. If permission is granted, the student is counted in enrollment figures. Moreover, even without permission, there is no state policy for determining whether students are taking a course more than two times. Also, students can also take a remedial course multiple times by going to another college, because the state has only very recently developed a student tracking system (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002).

Testing upon Entry to College

There is mandatory assessment of incoming students using COMPASS and ASSET. However, students who present the right level of SAT and ACT scores (as determined by the colleges) can be exempted from taking the entrance exam (Martinez, Snider, & Day, 2003; Prince, 2004; Southern Regional Education Board, 2005; Virginia Community College System, 2003b). Moreover, even without SAT or ACT scores, not all students are tested or tested in all skills areas. According to a college president, colleges will waive testing if, say, a student already has a baccalaureate degree. And students are not tested in skill areas that are not prerequisites for their major. For example, students pursuing a vocational major that does not require any courses that have a college English prerequisite or a placement test score in reading are not tested in reading. And even if they need to be tested in reading, students can delay taking the test until they finally have to take a course that has such a prerequisite. The state has not standardized what the prerequisites are for different programs.

The VCCS has set which entrance exams are to be used (ASSET/COMPASS) and the range within which cut-off scores must fall. However, it has not mandated a particular threshold number, leaving that to the colleges to determine (Virginia Community College System, 2003b). As a college president commented, “[T]he VCCS has agreed upon certain range cut-off scores. We are not identical in our cut-off scores, not that I want to be and the reason is because we are not identical in our demographics for student population. We have ranges that we all work within to have certain cut-off scores and so on and so forth so we are doing some of that.”

Assignment to Remediation

There is mandatory placement in remediation if students fail the entrance exam. And students are supposed to take no more than 12 credit hours before they begin their remediation.

However, students can get around these state rules. As a state community college official noted, “Yes we have mandatory assessment and mandatory placement, but some students, too many students, can work around it...I have a hunch the engine is going to fire up where we take advantage of mandatory assessment and we put more teeth into mandatory placement.” A local community college official gave an example of how such waivers of mandatory placement can occur:

well what we do with our courses is place them based on this ACT test and then the first day of class we give a second test to make sure they are placed correctly. Occasionally if I have a parent that is just adamant against it we have them sign a statement that we put in their file that they have been advised not to take a particular course, but they have chosen to do that...It is okay to be a little bit flexible, but I haven't done that 10 times in 5 years. If I have someone totally adamant against it, that is fine.

Opportunity to Take Non-Remedial Courses

There is no state regulation. However, the state has encouraged colleges to identify college level courses that students can take while they are being remediated in another area.

Student Eligibility for Financial Aid

Students who are in remedial education are eligible for financial aid even if taking only remedial education. A college president explained that “you are eligible for 150% of your credits that your program requires; [for example, if your program requires] 70 you may be able to take as many as 105 credits before you are no longer eligible...it is in that the developmental falls.”

Institutional Sources of Remediation

The state has issued a rule that the four-year colleges are no longer supposed to be providing remediation.

Content of Remediation

There is some state guidance on the content of remediation in that, while the community colleges determine what level of remediation they wish to provide, they select the courses from the state common course document.

Exiting from Remediation

The state does not set exit requirements from remediation.

Credits

Remedial education cannot be credited toward an associate degree. However, upon approval of the Dean of Instruction of a college, or another appropriate academic administrator, some developmental courses can be made credit applicable toward diploma and certificate programs (Virginia Community College System, 2005). However, colleges are not required to do so and at least one of the colleges we studied did not do so.

Reducing the Need for Remediation

The state has an initiative underway to align high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements by identifying a core of 12 college-level courses taken in high school that will be accepted for credit by any public institution in Virginia (Futures Project, 2004; Helderman, 2004). Through the Senior Year Initiative, students can get college freshman courses out of the way before leaving high school. Hence, they are less likely to need remediation. If a student passes a college-level course, the college then accepts the course and students do not have to take the college placement test in that area. However, College English is not one of the courses that is eligible under the Senior Year Initiative.

In addition, the Virginia community colleges have been taking various steps to work with high schools to improve the academic preparation of students coming into the community college, including offering courses at the high schools and administering placement tests to students while they are still in high school.

Evaluations by Respondents

The system of locally set cut-off scores has caused some difficulties. As a local community college official noted, “Some of our colleges are close to each other and so students can go back and forth sometimes and it is a little unfair for different colleges within the same system to be

using different tests; different cutoff scores. Students would want to go to this college because their cutoff scores were lower. We didn't want to compete with each other."

Policy Proposals by Respondents

An interesting policy question concerning community college remediation involves home-schooled students, who are numerous in Virginia and not infrequently end up at community colleges. As a state community college official noted, "We are finding that for some parents who do not have the ability to home school at a higher level these students at a very young age are landing on our door steps saying, 'we want to come to the community college' and obviously they test into remedial courses. One of our policy issues for the community college system is to look at that and say are we the right access point for remedial education in the state of Virginia for home-schooled students. It is an interesting policy issue that I think we'll need, once we figure out what we recommend, I think is a biggie for the state to deal with."

Academic Guidance and Support

Current Policy

Virginia does not have a policy guiding academic counseling and guidance. Moreover, the state does not have a dedicated stream of funding for supporting it. Rather, funding comes with the state's appropriation for student services. As a result, colleges have great discretion over how much they spend on guidance and support and what form it takes. As a state official put it, "academic counseling and guidance is really with K-12. They've [the state legislature] not touched that with a 10 ft. pole for higher ed. So when we get our dollars and give them out to our colleges, our college presidents determine where those resources are best spent."

Evaluations by Respondents

A common sentiment among the participants at the Futures Project Policy Listening meeting in Virginia was that counseling and guidance services were inadequate (Futures Project, 2004). As a state official put it,

One of the things that happened over the course of declining funding was you know the first areas to go were campus facilities kinds of people and support staff; the second place to go is student services and that includes that includes counseling and advisement unfortunately.

This assessment was echoed by another state official:

[T]hey're leaving it up to individual institutions to make those decisions. When you have budget cuts then you often find cuts to student support services first. I mean, you leave in the basics of admissions and records and financial aid and counseling....And we have something like a 600 to 1 ratio of students to counselor.

Non-Academic Guidance and Support

Current Policy

The state does not have specific funding for nonacademic guidance and support, and it does not have standards for its form and content.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

A local community college president proposed that the state should provide funding for non-academic support services such as transportation, baby sitting, health care, and counseling.

Transfer Assistance

In recent years, the State of Virginia has begun to devote considerable attention to transfer policy. In its strategic plan, *Dateline 2009* (2003), the Virginia Community College System pledges: "The VCCS will triple the number of transfer program graduates who successfully transfer to a four-year college or university" (Virginia Community College System, 2003a, p. 7). Also, in 2003, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (2003b) stated:

As the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) developed the 2003 *Systemwide Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Virginia*, the strengthening of transfer and articulation policies emerged as a key strategy in dealing with budget shortfalls, demands for greater efficiency in higher education, and pressures to provide access to at least 38,000 additional students by the end of the decade. As a result, one of the plan's strategies for "advancing Virginia through higher education" is "expanding the capability of our community college system and ensuring reduced time to degree through seamless transfer between community colleges and senior institutions." (p. ii)

This interest in the community college transfer route as a means to meet increased demand for higher education took on added weight in 2005. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia forecast a sharp increase in the number of college goers and raised the specter that more of them will be unable to find a place in the four-year colleges. This has led the Chancellor of the state community college system, Glenn DuBois, to suggest that more baccalaureate aspirants be

encouraged to enter higher education through the community colleges and then transfer to four-year colleges. Besides meeting the added demand, he also noted that beginning at a community college would cost the state less than if the students were to begin at the four-year colleges (Robertson, 2005). Needless to say, these arguments put added weight on developing a transfer system that is friction-free as possible.

Current Policy

Student Financial Aid

Virginia does not have a student aid program specifically directed to transfer students, but they can get funding from the general student aid programs.

Transfer Advising

Virginia does not provide community colleges with funds specifically earmarked for transfer advising and it does not specify the form of transfer advising.

However, the state has taken steps to make transfer information more available. The State Policy on Transfer states that each senior public institution should provide transfer information in a convenient manner to students (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2004). In addition, HB 989 (signed into law April 2004) directs SCHEV to “develop and make available to the public information identifying all general education courses offered at public two-year institutions and designating those that are accepted for purposes of transfer for course credit at four-year public and private institutions of higher education in Virginia” (Virginia General Assembly, 2004b). The State Council has already begun to develop this list of courses. The intent is to make the list available on line to students (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2005f).

Moreover, the state has formally stated a concern about proper transfer advising for minority students: “In order to ensure that minority students are being encouraged to pursue the bachelor’s degree, community colleges should determine whether minority students are being counseled into or otherwise enrolled disproportionately in programs that are not designed to transfer” (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2004).

Statewide Articulation Agreements

HB 989 and SB 338 (signed into law April 2004) direct the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to facilitate the development of dual-admissions and articulation agreements between two- and four-year public and private institutions of higher education in Virginia. These agreements would be subject to the admissions requirements of the four-year

colleges (Virginia General Assembly, 2004a, b).

HB 2337 (signed into law April 2005) requires each four-year public institution of higher education, beginning with academic year 2006-2007, to develop additional articulation and transfer agreements “with uniform application to all institutions within the Virginia Community College System” that meet appropriate general education and program requirements at the four-year institutions; and provide additional opportunities for associate degree graduates to be admitted and enrolled (Virginia General Assembly, 2005a). Moreover, HB 2866 also enacted in April 2005 gives this mandate greater weight by requiring that universities seeking greater freedom from state fiscal regulations and access to certain fiscal benefits take steps to “develop articulation agreements that have uniform application to all Virginia community colleges... [and] provide additional opportunities for associate degree graduates to be admitted and enrolled...” (Virginia General Assembly, 2005b). (For more on this, see the discussion below on performance accountability.)

Transfer of Academic Associate Degree

The State Policy on Transfer states that public four-year colleges and universities “should” give junior standing and designate as having met their lower division general education requirements to community college students who completed the associate degree of arts, sciences, or arts and sciences. However, students who receive an associate degree are not guaranteed – as in Florida and North Carolina – acceptance at a four-year college and junior status (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b, 2004).⁵

This effort to encourage students to transfer with an associate degree in hand was reaffirmed by HB 989 (signed into law April 2004), which directs the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to develop a State Transfer Module that designates those general education courses that are offered within various associate degree programs and are transferable with standing as a junior (third year) to the public four-year institutions (Virginia General Assembly, 2004b). However, students who take the courses in the State Transfer Module are neither guaranteed that they will be admitted to the public four-year colleges as juniors nor that all the courses will be accepted for transfer. The decision to accept the students and the courses still remains with the four-year colleges.

Occupational Education Transfer

There is some state policy on this type of transfer. The Virginia Community College System has developed an articulation agreement with Old Dominion University so that community college students can transfer into high-cost, high demand programs such as nursing and engineering, and it has been working on similar agreements with the other state universities (DuBois, 2003).

General Education Transfer

Since many students transfer without an associate degree in hand, HB 989 (2004) directs the State Council to “develop and make available to the public information identifying all general education courses offered at public two-year institutions and designating those that are accepted for purposes of transfer for course credit at four-year public and private institutions of higher education in Virginia.” However, senior colleges are not required to accept this package of courses. The package simply is an indication of the courses with high rates of transferability (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003, 2005f; Virginia General Assembly, 2004b).

Specific Major Modules

The state community college system has developed an articulation agreement with Old Dominion University so that community college students can transfer into high-cost, high demand programs such as nursing and engineering, and it is working on similar agreements with the other state universities (DuBois, 2003).

Common Course Numbering

The state does not have a common course numbering system.

Evaluations by Respondents

According to a state community college official, “We’ve had uneven success in initiating a statewide transfer program within Virginia...we’ve made attempts at it, but we still have a long way to go there.” Our interviews and reports by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia have documented a number of problems.

First, transfer enrollments at public four-year institutions have not been rising as fast as enrollments of students at two-year colleges who may plan to transfer. While the number of transfers rose 5% between 1993-94 and 2002-03, the number of public four-year college students rose 16% (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b).

Second, transfer students have had a hard time getting into the more selective public institutions. The rate of acceptance for two-year college students seeking to transfer to the more selective institutions has been low, while that for transfer to the larger urban institutions has been increasing (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b). The efforts of community colleges to develop effective transfer arrangements were stymied by the lack of receptivity by the four-year schools, which have wanted to become more selective. As a state community college official put it, “there is a little bit of an implicit struggle here between the community colleges and universities for resources, where the community colleges...and...maybe four universities in

the state out of 15 are committed to providing access....the community colleges are going to be the leading set of institutions on the access side and the universities are on the excellence side.”

Third, there is reason to believe that transfer students have encountered difficulties entering certain majors, if those majors are very popular with four-year college natives (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b).

Fourth, students have had difficulty transferring courses from the community college to the four-year institutions. One community college official commented on the difficulty of advising students as a result of the absence of strong transfer and articulation policies. “...it was really hard to advise a student on what to take because there were too many ifs on the other end if there student was a little bit unsure about which program they might want to go into or which college or university they might want to go to. It was really hard to advise a student and say well if you take these courses I know they’ll go.” These difficulties have stemmed from the fact that the state does not have a statewide articulation agreement. As a state community college official put it, and local presidents agreed, “Most of our transfer agreements are regionally based or individually college based.” Moreover, the state provisions for transferability of general education courses have not been as effective as hoped, with four-year colleges not always accepting general education courses for a variety of reasons (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b).

Compounding the credit transfer issue has been the rising number of dual-enrollment students. As dual-credit programs have grown, more and more students are encountering problems receiving credit for such courses when they enroll at four-year public institutions (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b). This has prompted Governor Warner’s Senior Year Initiative (described above).

Finally, even after transfer, students have encountered difficulties. Associate degree graduates who subsequently enroll at four-year public institutions have lagged substantially behind native students in their junior year in four-, five - and six-year graduation rates, particularly at public institutions (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b).

There is hope, however, that HB 2337 and 2866 (signed into law April 2005) will improve the transfer situation between the 2- and 4-year colleges (Robertson, 2005). Requiring the four-year colleges to develop systemwide articulation agreements and making the development of articulation agreements a measure of four-year college performance makes it more likely that those colleges and universities will become more supportive of transfer. In fact, officials at the Virginia Community College System report getting a lot of calls from four-year colleges to set up articulation agreements. For example, Virginia Commonwealth University has approached the VCCS to develop a systemwide agreement in which associate of arts graduates would be guaranteed admissions.⁶ The VCCS has therefore developed a form for systemwide agreements, which includes data feedback and scholarships for community college transfers.

Policy Proposals by Respondents

Despite the advances represented by recent legislation, our respondents still noted areas where further state policy activity would be useful.

To begin, it is important to make sure that the new articulation agreements address obstacles to transfer and post-transfer success that have been identified in Virginia.

Improving Credit Acceptance and Post-Transfer Success

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia has identified difficulties in getting credits accepted as the major institutional impediment to post-transfer success for transfer students.⁷ Hence, it made a number of policy proposals aimed to remove this particular impediment (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b):

- defining appropriate lower level requisites and prerequisites by field or discipline, which can also be used to satisfy lower division general education requirements;
- encouraging the declaration of a field(s) of interest and a transfer institution(s) by the time that students at two-year institutions have completed 30 credits;
- strengthening language in the state transfer policy concerning waivers of lower level general education requirements for graduates of a transfer associate degree program; and
- examining the phenomenon of “major creep” into the general education program, which promotes the designation of specific general education courses that can be “double-counted” to fulfill general education requirements and “other degree requirements” for the major.

Beyond systemwide articulation agreements that are systemwide and carefully specified, our respondents identified other important areas for policy making.

Transfer Student Financial Aid

In 2003, a report by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (2003b) recommended that the state “increase financial aid for transfer students to attend those four-year institutions that exhibit the greatest capacity to absorb additional transfer students.” And in 2005, a state official whom we interviewed stated: “I am submitting to the Governor a proposal...which would guarantee a transfer scholarship to those community college graduates who graduate at a certain level (I’d like to say a B or better) and who transfer once they’ve completed the degree...their scholarship essentially holds them on the tuition side to the rate when they attend the four-year university to the rate they were paying at the community college and the state makes up the difference and then sprinkles a little incentive money for the universities to play.”

In 2005 the Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System proposed that community college associate degree graduates with a grade-point average of B or better transferring to a four-year public institution would get a scholarship to pay the difference between the four-year college's tuition and the tuition the student had been paying at the community college. In addition, the four-year institution would get \$1,000 for each transfer student (DuBois, 2005; Robertson, 2005).

Transferability of an Associate Degree

The Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, Glenn DuBois, has been promoting the idea of guaranteeing four-year college admission to community college graduates who have met agreed upon requirements for curriculum and grade-point average (Robertson, 2005).

Common Course Numbering

Another major device states are using to ease the transfer of credits and to ensure that community college students are adequately prepared for four-year college expectations is to mandate common course numbering for lower division courses across all public colleges. However, our interviewees in Virginia felt that such a system would either never happen or that there would be only lip service but without real support. As a state community college official noted, "We have proclamations. I wouldn't say we have policies with a lot of teeth. We have Attorney General task force recommendations; we have statutes that say the State Council and the community college will work together to promote seamless transfer...we have no legislative mandate...."

Baccalaureate Provision

Current Policy

Since 1994, Old Dominion University has run a distance learning system (Teletechnet) to allow for the teaching of upper-division courses at community college. Classes are run and operated by Old Dominion University but offered at all the Virginia community colleges. This allows students to pursue a four-year degree without having to leave their home campus (Holland & Miller, 2004). Similarly, the University of Virginia (UVA) has begun to offer upper-division courses, taught by UVA faculty, at Tidewater Community College (Walzer, 2004).

However, there appears to be no state policy to mandate or finance other state universities to offer instruction at community colleges. And there is no state policy for allowing community colleges to themselves offer baccalaureate degrees. In fact, top state community college officials are opposed to the latter possibility:

I do not believe that community colleges should be offering baccalaureates where they are in some places. My fear there is we drift away from the mission of access and we start opening the door that professors say, “Ah I don’t like these remedial courses; I want to teach the upper level courses.” I don’t really think that is our job. I don’t think that is our gift to America. But I do believe we can partner with four-year colleges to bring those kinds of opportunities to places where they don’t have them. This Teletechnet is really something else; we make a few bucks off it too.

Noncredit to Credit Articulation

The state apparently has no policy to encourage student movement from noncredit to credit programs. As a community college president put it, “the non-credit stuff is non-transferable. Those are usually the kinds of things that are specifically training for the job as opposed to trying to find some credential you use to transport...we have the CEUs which is in essence a transportable credential for employment, but not necessarily for credit at a four-year institution.”

Workforce and Economic Development

The community colleges are designated as the lead state agency for providing workforce training in Virginia (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002). In March 2002 the Legislature passed HB 1022, which requires community colleges to offer non-credit courses at a time and place that meet the needs of employers and to deal directly with employers in designing and offering courses to meet real, current and projected workforce training needs. At this time, the Virginia Community College System supports a Statewide Training Network providing contract training at all 23 community colleges (Virginia Community College System, 2005f).

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Virginia has developed an extensive array of performance accountability indicators. And in 2005, the Legislature mandated a new performance funding system that will be implemented over the course of this year and next.

Current Policy

Performance Indicators

The state collects a wide variety of data pertaining to access and success. The access measures capture the race and income composition of enrollees, both in general and in specific programs such as remedial and dual-enrollment. The success measures pertain to rates of retention, technical skill attainment, graduation, transfer, and job placement. The specific indicators are presented in Appendix Table A1 below.

An interesting feature of the data collected by the state is that, for the most part, they are not disaggregated by race and income. Though the enrollment indicators are broken down by race and income, the success indicators (retention, graduation, transfer, and job placement) are not. A legislative official noted: “I don’t typically see data broken out or aggregated by low-income and minority [status].”

Data Collection Procedures

The state maintains a data warehouse in the form of a website from which reports on enrollments, admissions, financial aid, and so forth can be downloaded. The website has the capacity of generating reports for the community college system or for specific community colleges (<http://research.schev.edu/warehouse/?from=reportstats>). The state has not yet established a data warehouse that encompasses the universities and K-12 education as well. However, recent state legislation allocated more money for data gathering by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and SCHEV is holding conversations about how to expand its data capacity.

Connection of Performance Measures to State Funding⁸

In April 2005, the state enacted legislation (HB 2866) that provides for a system of “incentive performance benefits.” The community colleges as a single system (but the public universities individually) are allowed certain fiscal advantages if, after they make a public commitment to realizing 11 state goals, they have been certified as having met institutional performance benchmarks pertaining to those goals. The fiscal advantages are to receive interest on the tuition and fees and other funds deposited with the State Treasury, unexpended appropriations at the close of the fiscal year,⁹ rebates due the state on credit card purchases, and rebates of transaction fees paid for sole source procurements made by the institution. The 11 state goals are the following (Virginia General Assembly, 2005b):

- Provide access for all citizens throughout the Commonwealth, including underrepresented populations and meet enrollment projections and degree estimates as agreed upon with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.
- Ensure that higher education remains affordable, regardless of individual or family income.

- Offer a broad range of undergraduate and, where appropriate, graduate programs consistent with its [institutional] mission and assess regularly the extent to which the institution's curricula and degree programs address the state's need for sufficient graduates in particular shortage areas.
- Ensure that the institution's academic programs and course offerings maintain high academic standards by undertaking a continuous review and improvement;
- Improve student retention such that students progress from initial enrollment to a timely graduation, and that the number of degrees conferred increases as enrollment increases.
- Develop articulation agreements that have uniform application to all Virginia community colleges, provide additional opportunities for associate degree graduates to be admitted and enrolled, and offer dual-enrollment programs in cooperation with high schools.
- Actively contribute to efforts to stimulate the economic development of the state and the area in which the institution is located.
- Increase the level of externally funded research conducted at the institution and facilitate the transfer of technology from university research centers to private sector companies.
- Work actively and cooperatively with elementary and secondary school administrators, teachers, and students in public schools and school divisions to improve student achievement, upgrade the knowledge and skills of teachers, and strengthen leadership skills of school administrators.
- Prepare a six-year financial plan.
- Conduct the institution's business affairs in a manner that maximizes operational efficiencies and economies for the institution, contributes to maximum efficiencies and economies of state government, and meets the financial and administrative management standards as specified by the Governor.

In September 2005, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) adopted Institutional Performance Standards, which contain measures on which all public colleges will be judged: 17 "measurable targets" for two-year colleges, 18 for four-year non-research institutions, and 20 for research institutions (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2005h). SCHEV submitted the standards to Governor Warner, who then made some adjustments before including them -- along with measures his office developed surrounding financial and administrative management -- in his December 2005 budget bill under the title of "Assessment of Institutional Performance." The Governor's budget bill listed 26 performance measures, and did not differentiate goals based on institutional mission or direct SCHEV on how to "certify" performance (State of Virginia, 2005). At the time of this writing, the budget bill is in the hands of the General Assembly

Once the standards are enacted, each institution will work with SCHEV to set institutional benchmarks. SCHEV will use the benchmarks to determine whether colleges should be certified

as meeting the performance standards in effect on an annual basis. The first round of certifications is planned for spring of 2007. To be certified, institutions will need to provide successful demonstration of institutional performance at or above the “absolute minimum standard of performance” on all measures; successful demonstration of continuing progress toward established targets on 14 of 17 targets for two-year colleges; and successful demonstration of commitment to the overall goals by failing no more than two measures for any single goal. If an institution is not certified in any given year, it will not receive the financial benefits. There is no further “punishment” for not meeting the goals outlined in the act (Sampson, 2005a; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2005h; Virginia General Assembly, 2005a; Walzer, 2005).

Evaluations by Respondents

Indicators Used

State community college official noted the problems that occur when the state does not disaggregate data by student background:

Before they have policy I think they have to agree there is a problem and would a policy then help address the problem....If the state hasn't provided any guidance on the kinds of, for example, let's say income data that we need to collect or they aren't asking any more about numbers of minority students that we are serving then there is no problem to them because there is no data that would suggest there is a problem one way or the other. Therefore, if you have no data you can't identify what the trends are and by looking at the trends determining you may need to do something about it.

Use by State Officials to Craft State Policies

According to both state and local community college officials, the data collected are not yet being used by the state to “inform policy development. We haven't crossed that threshold.” As a community college president noted, “My criticism here is that those [policies] haven't necessarily been as much data driven as they need to be data driven.”

It should be noted, however, that *Dateline 2009* had just been announced in fall 2003, so while interviewees made some references to the plan in our interviews in 2004 and 2005, not all that much had passed for it to have much impact. When asked how well the *Dateline 2009* goals of improving student outcomes were being met, one interviewee replied that “There really hasn't been anything to influence us at this point. Other than this latest discussion that has begun as a result of Dateline 2009...we are just sort of fresh into this...There hasn't been anything prescriptive that has come from either the VCCS central office or the state saying that this is what you must do...”

Use by Local Community College Officials

We received mixed reports. A local community college president did state that the state performance data were having an effect: “we are [looking at performance accountability] within the VCCS and within ourselves and looking at our success rates for example and looking to improve our success rates across our students. We do that because we are in the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools. We’ve had assessment programs in place for years.”

But other local officials saw little impact, in great part because the state often presents the data in aggregate form, lumping all the community colleges together. A local community college official noted: “There are some accountability measures that the State Council of Higher Education looks at and those apply to both community colleges and four year colleges....The community colleges are all lumped together as a system.” By lumping the community colleges together, the state is unable to make public the performance of individual institutions. As a result, problems at one institution are masked by the improving performance at other institutions.

Moreover, it is “recommended” that the senior colleges report back to community colleges on the success of transfer students, with community colleges using that information, particularly for minority students, to improve their programs. However, it is unclear what kind of compliance this will get from the four-year colleges and the community colleges.

Finally, the state’s new performance funding system was just enacted in spring 2005 and has yet to be implemented. Hence, we cannot yet tell what impact it will have.

Policy Proposals

At the Futures Project Listening Tour meeting in Virginia, participants were asked what data are needed but not yet collected in Virginia. One response was that the state needed to collect data on how many students want to transfer from a community college to a four-year institution but are turned away (Futures Project, 2004). Furthermore, there clearly was sentiment in our interviews that the state needs to disaggregate its data more by race and income and by community college.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Virginia has been one of the less active Achieving the Dream states when it comes to state policymaking, although this has been changing in recent years. The state has been making a strong push in such areas as financial aid, transfer policy, and performance accountability. In the area of financial aid, it is one of three Achieving the Dream states with a dedicated program of aid for part-time students. In the area of performance accountability, the state has become one of three AtD states with performance funding and it has developed an extensive array of interesting measures of post-transfer success.

However, there are several areas where the state may wish to consider further policymaking efforts: include: state finance; benefits for undocumented students; remediation; transfer; baccalaureate provision; academic and nonacademic guidance; noncredit to credit transfer; and performance accountability. There is also an overall issue that the state needs to address, but it is a very ticklish one, given the political culture of the state: the reality of major inequality by income and race and the need to directly and specifically address that inequality rather than rely on a “rising tide lifts all boats” ideology.

With regard to state finance, the state has one of the lowest shares of state funding for community colleges. Given wide disparities in wealth across the state, a larger share may be important to help equalize resources across the colleges so that they can better address student needs.

The rising number of undocumented students in Virginia suggests that the state may have to revisit the controversial question of providing such students with guaranteed admission, in-state tuition, and state student aid. However, given how much controversy this issue has raised in the past, there may be a need for more effective political mobilization, including a new way of casting the issue that does not as easily provoke past responses.

The state’s remediation policies are extensive but there is one notable omission: state specified cutoff scores on the placement exam. In the absence of such state specification, the community colleges find themselves at odds with each other, with students getting different evaluations depending on the college. Moreover, one of our interviewees raised the very interesting question of how should the colleges (and therefore the state) address the growing number of home schooled students appearing at community colleges with inadequate academic skills.

The state has been making a major push with regard to easing transfer, but much remains to be done. As with the other AtD states, Virginia should consider providing student aid specifically earmarked for transfer students and enhancing community college transfer advising efforts by providing state funds and standards for the extent and form of transfer advising. Moreover, the state should consider various means of facilitating credit transfer, including guaranteed admission and junior status for associate degree graduates, general education modules that must be accepted by four-year colleges, statewide transfer modules for popular majors, and a common course numbering system encompassing both the community colleges and the public universities. The great political difficulty that many of these proposals face is the great independence of the

public universities (particularly the elite ones), which has become greater as they push for charter status. However, there is evidence that the state's new accountability structure for the public four-year colleges is making them considerably more receptive to working with the community colleges on transfer articulation.

This very independence of the public universities suggests that the Virginia Community College System may wish to explore the possibility of having community colleges giving their own baccalaureate degrees. This will make it more likely that vocational students will be able to receive BAs, if only by compelling the universities to become more receptive to community college transfer demands in order to ward off the specter of competition in giving the baccalaureate.

Like the other Achieving the Dream states, Virginia needs to consider providing dedicated state funding and standards for academic and non-academic counseling. Especially if it does not entail preconceived ideas of what jobs less advantaged students are destined for, such counseling can play an important role in expanding opportunity. Yet the lack of specific funding and state standards for counseling and guidance leaves it at the mercy of the ups and downs of community college funding and the belief that counseling can be cut back when financial times are hard.

Virginia should also consider greater state policy and financial support to facilitate student movement from noncredit to credit programs. Such movement is particularly important for minority and low-income students who often enter the community college through the noncredit side. Hence, the state may wish to consider how to provide state policy support and funding for student movement between noncredit to credit education.

Finally, with regard to performance accountability, Virginia should consider adding performance measures addressing success in remediation. Moreover, it is important – despite the political difficulties – that the performance measures be broken down by student income and race so that a clear picture emerge of how the community colleges are affecting students differing in background. The state should also move to creating a state data warehouse encompassing the K-12, community college, and university sectors. Moreover, Virginia – like all the other AtD states – should consider providing specific funding and technical assistance to community college institutional researchers. This becomes particularly important for smaller, more rural ones with limited resources to gather and evaluate data on their institutional performance.

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ENDNOTES

¹ We wish to thank all those whom we interviewed about state community college policy in Virginia. We also would like to thank Monty Sullivan and Toni Cleveland of the Virginia Community College System, Diane Brasington of J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, and Lara Couturier of Brown University for their thoughtful comments on this chapter. Needless to say, all errors of omission and commission are our own.

² Despite this perception that access is not a problem for low-income students, there are some extremely poor areas of Virginia, and many areas of the state have suffered a great loss of industry. This poverty has made retraining opportunities important.

³ The estimated average nonresident tuition and required fees in 2005-06 were \$6,581 (Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2006: Table 10).

⁴ The CSAP also allows students in participating Virginia private non-profit four-year colleges or universities to be eligible.

⁵ State data from 2002-03 indicate that only 78% of transfers who came into four-year colleges with associate degrees were given junior or senior status. However, these figures include those coming with applied science associate degrees (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2003b).

⁶ Meanwhile, both the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary have formed transfer agreements with Tidewater Community College. TCC has had longstanding agreements with less selective Virginia public universities but this is a first with the leading state universities. This new openness of the state universities has been attributed to the 2005 state higher education restructuring act (HB 2866) (Walzer, 2005).

⁷ However, this ignores a host of other institutional obstacles including lack of financial aid for transfer students, inadequate orientation and student support services for transfer students, and poor alignment between the academic expectations of community colleges and four-year colleges (Dougherty, 1994, 2002).

⁸ Our particular thanks to Lara Couturier for help in working out the provisions of the emerging performance funding system in Virginia.

⁹ This second measure resembles a feature of the performance funding system in North Carolina.

APPENDIX TABLE A1**Virginia Outcomes Data**

| Measure | Reported to Public | | | Reported to State Council of Higher Education for Virginia | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------|-------------|--|---------|--------|
| | By CC | By race | By SES | By CC | By race | By SES |
| ACCESS MEASURES | | | | | | |
| Total fall enrollment | SCHEV, VCCS | SCHEV | SCHEV, VCCS | VCCS | | |
| Enrollment, full time/part time | VCCS | SCHEV, VCCS | VCCS | VCCS | | |
| Enrollment in dual credit programs | VCCS | | | VCCS | | |
| Enrollment (not completers) in remedial education (IPEDS data) | VCCS | VCCS | VCCS | VCCS | | |
| Occupational program enrollment: Minority gender enrollments [e.g. women in traditionally male majors] as a percentage of total enrollment for all programs with gender under-representation (Perkins core indicator 4P1) | VCCS | VCCS | VCCS | | | |
| SUCCESS MEASURES | | | | | | |
| Retention: from fall to spring | VCCS | | | SCHEV | | |
| Retention: from fall to fall | VCCS | | | SCHEV | | |
| Skill attainment: Percentage of technical majors in certificate, diploma, and degree programs successfully completing academic skills course (Perkins core indicator 1P1) | VCCS | | | | | |
| Skill attainment: Percentage of technical majors in certificate, diploma, and degree programs successfully completing technical skills course (Perkins indicator 1P2) | VCCS | | | | | |
| Graduation: Degrees awarded | SCHEV, VCCS | | | | | |
| Graduation: Number (1996 cohort) (IPEDS) | VCCS | | | | | |
| Graduation: Rate (1996 cohort) (IPEDS) | VCCS | | | VCCS | | |
| Graduation: Rate for first-time, full-time students after three years | VCCS, SCHEV | | | VCCS | | |
| Graduation: Minority gender graduates as a percentage of the total graduates for all programs with gender under-representation (Perkins core indicator 4P2) | VCCS | VCCS | VCCS | | | |
| Graduation efficiency: Credits earned as a percent of credits required AA, AS, AAS | VCCS | | | VCCS | | |
| Graduation efficiency: Percentage of first-time, full-time, occupational-technical freshmen completing program within 150% of program length (Perkins core indicator 2P2) | VCCS | | | | | |
| Transfers: Number who transfer annually to instate institutions | VCCS, SCHEV | | | | | |
| Transfer: Rate for graduates | VCCS | | | | | |

| Measure | Reported to Public | | | Reported to State Council of Higher Education for Virginia | | |
|--|--------------------|---------|--------|--|---------|--------|
| | By CC | By race | By SES | By CC | By race | By SES |
| Transfer: Rate for community college entrants who earn 12 or more credits within four years at community college and transfer within four years ^a | VCCS | | | | | |
| Transfer success: Average GPA for CC entrants who earned 12 credits at CC and transferred within 4 years | VCCS | | | | | |
| Transfer success: Rate completing a BA or higher degree within 8 years for CC entrants who earned 12 credits at CC and transferred within 4 years | VCCS | | | | | |
| Transfer success: Percentage of transfers who are in good standing one year after graduation | VCCS ^b | | | | | |
| Workforce activity: Numbers trained through contract training | VCCS | | | VCCS | | |
| Job placement: Proportion of graduates employed in Virginia one year after graduation | VCCS | | | | | |
| Job placement and educational persistence: Of technical graduates, proportion employed or studying at a four-year college 6-12 months after CC graduation (Perkins core indicator 3P1) | VCCS | | | | | |
| Job Retention: Of technical graduates found working, proportion who continue working for a period of at least one quarter (Perkins core indicator 3P2) | VCCS | | | | | |

Notes:

a. This is the so-called “Cohen” transfer rate developed by Arthur M. Cohen at UCLA.

b. Indicates that data are reported for the community college system as a whole and are not broken down by individual college.

Sources:

* SCHEV: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia: Reports of Institutional Effectiveness (2005g)

* VCCS: Virginia Community College System (2005b,c,d,e)

* McHewitt and Taylor (2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b): These reports were done for the Virginia Community College System.