Strategies for Improving Academic Readiness for College

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West Virginia Higher Education Commission

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What is Academic Readiness For College and Career Readiness?

Preparing Today’s Students for Tomorrow’s Jobs (Perna, 2012):

• No consistent definition

• Diversity of educational options and approaches
  – Multiple pathways

• Many policies and programs to improve workforce readiness but limited research or evidence of effectiveness
Average Wages of US Employed Adults By Literacy Proficiency Level

Percentage of Adults Age 16-65 By Level of Literacy Proficiency and Educational Attainment

2012

Level 4/5

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

< level 1

Percentage of Adults Age 16-65 By Level of Literacy Proficiency and Race/Ethnicity

Academic Competencies for Bachelor’s Degree Recipients

West Virginia Higher Education Assessment Council (2013)

- Quantitative literacy
- Citizenship
- Critical thinking / analytic inquiry / problem solving
- Communications
WV College and Career Readiness Definition

Components:
• College readiness
  – Knowledge and skills
• Career readiness
  – Knowledge and skills
• Dispositions

Implications of this definition for higher education institutions?
Recommendations
(The State of College Access and Completion)

1. Improve academic readiness for college.
2. Improve alignment across and within sectors and levels
3. Improve college affordability
4. Ensure early knowledge of college and aid
5. Adapt approaches to reflect diversity of students, institutions, and state and other contexts
6. Collect and use data to monitor college access and completion and refine policies and practices

WV Innovations in College Access
(West Virginia 2013 Report Card)

• Improve academic readiness
  – Federal GEAR-UP grant
  – P-20 Student Success Summit
  – Definition of “college readiness” (Dept Ed and HEC collaboration)
  – 12th grade Transition Math and English 12 CR courses
  – Higher Education Smarter Balanced Advisory Committee
  – Redesign dev’l education (Complete College America grant)

• Improve college-related knowledge
  – College counseling via text (Kresge)
  – Web-based college advising (linked to BANNER system)

• Increase college applications and awareness
  – College Foundation of WV web portal (cfwv.com)
  – College Application and Exploration Week program; College Day

• Improve college-going and completion of adult learners
  – Lumina-funded DegreeNow
  – RBA Today program
  – WV Remote Online Collaborative Knowledge system (WVROCKS)
  – Veterans Initiatives Task Force
Increase applications for financial aid
• Financial aid and FAFSA workshops
• Collect & disseminate data on FAFSA applications

Improve financial aid counseling
• Regional workshops for college financial aid staff
Promising Institutional Access Strategies

*Leading the Way: College Access in West Virginia*

- Early outreach
- Academic preparation
- Parental education and support
- Financial literacy
- Pathways to degree
- Admissions / Advising /Mentoring
- Adult student outreach
- Leveraging data to inform strategies
Discussion

• How should we define academic readiness for college?
  – Reactions to the new definition?
• What strategies are working well to improve readiness of traditional students? Adult learners?
• What strategies are not working? Why not?
• What are the roles of different players in improving college readiness?
• Will Common Core State Standards improve readiness?
• How can higher education institutions work effectively with high schools to create a P-20 approach?
• How can we better use data to inform understandings of academic readiness and effective strategies for improving readiness?