Complete College Ohio Task Force:
Working Group Final Recommendations

Ready for College

No Time to Waste

Help Me Cross the Finish Line

Ohio | University System of Ohio
Board of Regents

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Recommendation 1: Require institution-specific Campus Completion Plans.

Require each college, university and adult career technical center in the University System of Ohio to develop an institution-specific Campus Completion Plans that is consistent with the institution's mission and strategic priorities.

Require institution-specific Campus Completion Plans.

Each plan will include the following:

- Specific measureable completion goals

- A mix of strategies and tactics, including – as appropriate – strategies and tactics offered in this report

- A communications strategy

- Metrics for success, including both campus-specific metrics and common metrics shared by all USO institutions.

**Recommendation 2: Adopt a consistent, statewide
definition of "college and career readiness."**

*Adopt a consistent, statewide definition of "college and
career readiness," identifying clear expectations for
mastery of content knowledge and skills. This definition
should be completely aligned with the college readiness
and "remediation-free" standards developed by Ohio
college and university presidents with input from faculty
panels and the College Readiness Advisory Committee.*

Adopt a consistent, statewide definition of "college and career readiness."

- A consistent, statewide definition of "college and career readiness" to reflect

    (a) the PARCC College and Career Ready Determinations and Performance Level Descriptors

    (b) the common set of college readiness expectations and remediation-free standards to be adopted by Ohio's public college and university presidents by Dec. 31, 2012.

Recommendation 3: Adopt a consistent, comprehensive statewide definition of "college completion" and uniform statewide credit hour requirements for common college credentials.

Adopt a consistent, comprehensive definition of "college completion" that includes bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, workforce certificates and other industry-recognized credentials. Ohio also should consider adopting consistent statewide definitions of postsecondary education workforce certificates and establishing a consistent statewide number of credit hours required for an associate degree (60 hours) and a baccalaureate degree (120 hours), unless accreditation requirements mandate additional hours.

Adopt a consistent, comprehensive statewide definition of "college completion" and uniform statewide credit hour requirements for common college credentials.

- Defining college completion more broadly than bachelor's degrees and associate degrees reflects a more accurate picture of the reality of today's college going students' circumstances and learning goals.

- Students have seen a steady increase in the number of credit hours required to earn a degree in many programs and majors.

- Upon completion and adoption of the new policy, colleges and universities would need to review major and core requirements to bring their credit-hour requirements in line with the new standards.

Recommendation 4: Establish stronger collaboration and tighter alignment across the P-16 education continuum.

Establish mechanisms for increasing collaboration among higher education institutions and P-12 partners to align academic standards, assessments and curricula that result in tighter overall alignment of high school completion requirements and college readiness expectations.

Establish stronger collaboration and tighter alignment across the P-16 education continuum.

Alignment will help ensure the following:

- More students leave high school prepared to succeed in college and careers

- More students graduate from high school having earned postsecondary credit

- More adult learners transition successfully from ABLE/GED programs to postsecondary education

- The need for remedial education courses at colleges and universities is reduced.

Recommendation 5: Establish a new system of high school assessments to improve preparation and readiness for college.

Replace the Ohio Graduation Test with a new high school assessment system designed to inform and enhance high school students' course-taking decisions, increase the likelihood that students will be college ready by the time they graduate from high school, and improve first-year college and career course placement decisions.

Establish a new system of high school assessments to improve preparation and readiness for college.

The new high school assessment system should include the following components:

- A nationally standardized readiness assessment

- End-of-course and end-of-year exams in grades 9, 10 and 11 that measure student learning in specific content areas

- A nationally standardized college readiness assessment in the junior or senior year of high school

Recommendation 6: **Intensify engagement of students and families prior to students' enrollment in college.**

Foster and enhance early family and student engagement with colleges and universities to build awareness of academic programs and career paths, institutional processes and expectations, and college/university resources and activities.

Intensify engagement of students and families prior to students' enrollment in college.

Suggested tactics include the following:

- Promote the availability and value of community-based college access programs, federal TRIO programs and volunteer programs

- Promote the use of the Ohio Means Success college access portal

- Expand marketing and information from the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority

Recommendation 7: Broaden awareness of connections between college completion and career opportunities.

Strengthen linkages between college coursework, earned credentials and job placement, and increase support for Ohioans transitioning from college to career. Engagement of business and industry, in career-focused courses and through internship and co-op opportunities, will be critical to this strategy.

Broaden awareness of connections between college completion and career opportunities.

- Provide students with both statewide and regional information about available careers and workforce needs.

- Improve and expand mechanisms for making linkages between credentials and employment while students are still in school.

- Help college students develop individual plans for their graduation and job search.

- Increase opportunities for work-based experiential learning such as co-ops and internships.

- Establish clear guidelines for both paid and unpaid credit-bearing internships.

- Develop statewide standards for all credit-bearing internships and co-op learning opportunities.

Recommendation 8: Enhance financial literacy and planning for students and families.

Enhance the clarity, comprehensiveness and accessibility of information available to students and their families about the true and full cost of a college education; options and resources for planning for and paying for a college education; and simplified fee structures and flexible payment plans designed to overcome common financial obstacles to earning a college degree.

Enhance financial literacy and planning for students and families.

- Ensure that financial literacy programming is available to students and their families throughout the student's postsecondary career.

- Provide fully transparent information to students and parents about the total actual costs of attending college.

- Ensure that students and their families understand how Pell Grants work

- Provide degree Return on Investment (ROI) data

Recommendation 9: Expand opportunities for earning college credits that count toward a degree or certificate before graduating from high school.

Expand eligibility and opportunities for more students to earn more college credits before enrolling in college through broadened availability of college credit, heightened academic rigor in middle school and high school curricula, appropriate financial incentives and more aggressive promotion of Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement, Post Secondary Enrollment Options, Early College High School, Tech Prep and International Baccalaureate programs. The recommended expansion should include changing dual enrollment to enable participation from a broader range of students.

Expand opportunities for earning college credits that count toward a degree or certificate before graduating from high school.

- Dual Enrollment

- Advanced Placement

- Post Secondary Enrollment Options

- Early College High School

- Tech Prep

- International Baccalaureate programs

Recommendation 10: Increase opportunities for adults to earn college credits for meaningful knowledge and skills documented through Prior Learning Assessments.

Assist more adults returning to school with earning postsecondary education credentials by maximizing opportunities for these individuals to earn college credit for meaningful college-level knowledge, skills and experiences they can demonstrate through Prior Learning Assessments.

Increase opportunities for adults to earn college credits for meaningful knowledge and skills documented through Prior Learning Assessments.

- Develop a document describing promising practices for the assessment and purposeful connection of prior learning to degree and certificate programs.

- Facilitate local and regional discussions of exemplary practices.

- Identify faculty professional development opportunities.

- Launch a statewide campaign to communicate and promote the benefits of PLAs.

- Create a mechanism to track PLAs awarded by institutions and students who have used PLAs as they progress from course to course and through completion.

Recommendation 11: **Adopt more holistic college placement assessments and policies.**

Improve campus placement and assessment policies for incoming students to ensure the most appropriate path is available for students to reach better outcomes. Use multiple valid measures of both academic and non-academic competencies and risk factors to

a) *assess and place incoming students for optimal success;*

b) *reduce the number of students who are misplaced in remedial education courses;*

c) *develop appropriate coursework to prepare students for college work and careers. In addition to using multiple measures of assessment, colleges and universities also should consider adopting uniform placement policies and implementing mandatory preparation experiences for placement testing.*

Adopt more holistic college placement assessments and policies.

- Develop statewide standards for postsecondary placement.

- Use multiple-measure assessments to evaluate academic and non-academic readiness.

- Consider implementing mandatory preparation experiences for placement testing.

- Encourage aggressive placement of students into credit-bearing courses with supports.

Recommendation 12: Redesign and personalize remedial education course content and policies, especially for adults returning to school.

Redesign remedial education course content and policies in ways that

(a) *compress remedial coursework into a much more limited timeframe*

(b) *offer students multiple pathways for completing remedial coursework*

(c) *accelerate completion of remedial coursework and initial college-level gatekeeper courses. Emphasis should be on placing students in college-level gatekeeper courses with co-requisite supports for success and linked to their program of study goals.*

Redesign and personalize remedial education course content and policies, especially for adults returning to school.

- Restructure college/university remedial education placement processes and curricula

- Restructure remedial education to function as an "on ramp"

- Require immediate enrollment in remedial education courses upon placement, and immediate enrollment in gateway courses

- Develop three mathematics pathways

- Require students who need to repeat remedial classes to participate in some sort of intervention during or prior to successive attempts.

- Limit remedial course repeats.

<u>Recommendation 13</u>: Develop comprehensive, mandatory orientation and first-year experiences, as well as robust support and interventions for all students.

Develop comprehensive, mandatory first-year experiences that should include a first-year experience course, robust support services, proactive advising and targeted intervention strategies to help keep students – in particular, high-risk students – moving forward along the college completion continuum. The goal of the first-year experience should be to help students choose a program of study, or broad program area, and develop an academic plan with all required courses laid out in the recommended sequence.

Develop comprehensive, mandatory orientation and first-year experiences, as well as robust support and interventions for all students.

Possible tactical options include the following:

- Consider requiring new students at open access institutions to apply for admission at least six weeks prior to the start of their first academic term.

- Create summer bridge opportunities.

- Implement Welcome Week activities for all first-year students.

- Strengthen awareness of services available for students with learning disabilities.

- Institute mandatory first-year student orientation.

- Offer targeted activities and events for affinity groups.

Recommendation 14: Develop institutional systems that accelerate students' connection to clear and concise degree pathways, track progress toward academic goals and intervene when help is needed.

Develop institutional systems, resources and policies that accelerate students' connection to clear and concise programs of study, including both standardized academic pathways and highly individualized academic pathways, to provide the kind of academic focus and direction that are proven to increase completion rates.

Develop institutional systems that accelerate students' connection to clear and concise degree pathways, track progress toward academic goals and intervene when help is needed.

- Develop clear academic pathways for all college majors.

- Implement tools that clearly outline degree requirements for students.

- Other campuses have individualized approaches to academic pathways as well. One such example is the use of My Academic Plan (MAP) at Sinclair Community College.

Recommendation 15: Implement "intrusive" advising supported by robust academic support systems and services.

Develop and implement systems, policies and mechanisms that support "intrusive" advising and other complementary student supports that closely monitor student progress toward achieving academic goals, provide regular outreach at all stages of students' postsecondary education experiences, and identify and deploy intervention strategies, as needed, to keep students on track toward completion.

Implement "intrusive" advising supported by robust academic support systems and services.

Tactical options include the following:

- Implement an intrusive advising model for all students.

- Assign students to a specific advisor.

- Provide training for all advisors.

- Provide targeted, intensive intervention strategies for groups of students that tend to be less likely to complete.

- Offer seminars or survey classes on the institution and its resources.

- Offer a first-year course that provides students with information about the college's resources.

- Institute an early/academic alert system.

Recommendation 16: **Devise more innovative scheduling, registration and degree-granting policies and practices.**

Devise more flexible, innovative policies and practices for scheduling, registration, credit hour and course requirements, course delivery and course load to remove common obstacles that hinder students' progress toward completion.

Devise more innovative scheduling, registration and degree-granting policies and practices.

Tactical options for consideration include:

- Restructure delivery of degree programs to remove uncertainty in scheduling.

- Reorganize the traditional college schedule to allow for more paired courses that satisfy programmatic course sequences.

- Develop a system that allows students to register for an entire year.

- Increase the availability of one- or two-night-per-week programs that can be completed in a two-year timeframe for associate degrees.

Recommendation 17: Strategically enhance Ohio's articulation and credit transfer programs.

Reduce unnecessary and costly duplication of coursework, which inhibits completion, by building the capacity of Ohio's exemplary articulation and credit transfer programs and services to ensure

a) *expanded alignment of academic coursework with career-technical, military and experiential learning;*

b) *enhanced transfer student support services;*

c) *enhanced data collection and tracking of progress*

d) *more aggressive promotion of articulation and credit transfer programs and services.*

Strategically enhance Ohio's articulation and credit transfer programs.

The following recommendations are offered for consideration:

- Continue and enhance the Ohio Transfer Module, Transfer Assurance Guides, and Career-Technical Credit Transfer.

- Develop a comprehensive communications plan to raise awareness of credit-transfer options.

- Align more career-technical learning for transfer into certificates/degrees.

- Explore the creation of an Ohio Technical Transfer Module.

- Enhance data collection and technical efforts designed to track student progress.

<u>Recommendation 18</u>: Expand programs for rewarding and leveraging meaningful "packages" of academic program work that have been completed, or nearly completed, but not formally credentialed.

Scale up existing programs in Ohio that (a) award degrees for work completed and satisfying degree requirements but not formally credentialed, and (b) assist individuals who have left school with substantial college credits, but not quite enough for a formal credential, to complete the work required to earn a degree. Create new mechanisms for systematically rewarding interim levels of progress toward a degree or other academic goal as they are completed.

Expand programs for rewarding and leveraging meaningful "packages" of academic program work that have been completed, or nearly completed, but not formally credentialed.

Tactical recommendations include the following:

- Grant an industry-recognized workforce certificate as an interim credential.

- Grant an associate degree as an interim credential.

- Conduct routine degree audits for all students.

- Implement a statewide system of "reverse transfer".

- Expand the Win-Win approach to all Ohio community colleges.

Recommendation 19: Expand and diversify financial opportunities and incentives for achieving critical benchmarks and timely completion.

Expand and diversify financial rewards for students and colleges/universities to incentivize attainment of critical milestones on the pathway to completion and timely attainment of credentials of value in the marketplace.

Expand and diversify financial opportunities and incentives for achieving critical benchmarks and timely completion.

Tactical options for providing financial incentives for timely progress and completion include the following:

- Restructure the State Share of Instruction (SSI)

- Explore innovations in cost and aid structures

- Provide a formal tuition guarantee that locks in tuition as an incentive for timely completion.

- Co-incentivize completion

- Package financial aid to promote completion

- Distribute financial aid as a paycheck

- Offer performance-based scholarships/aid

Recommendation 20: **Mount a comprehensive statewide communications strategy about college completion.**

Mount a comprehensive statewide communications and marketing campaign, targeting prospective students and their families, for the purpose of raising awareness among students of all ages throughout Ohio of (a) the importance of attaining postsecondary education credentials; and (b) the expanded opportunities, resources and supports for degree completion in Ohio, including information about resources available to assist students and their families in planning for and paying for a college education.

<u>NEXT STEPS</u>

- The Chancellor shall **determine a dissemination strategy**.

- The Chancellor shall work with state policy leaders to **determine specific state-level commitments and actions**.

- The Chancellor shall engage higher education leadership to **reach consensus on uniform statewide definitions of "college and career readiness" and "college completion"**.

- The Chancellor, with input from college and university leadership, shall **develop a framework and timeline for development and submission of campus-level Campus Completion Plans**.

- The Chancellor shall **initiate work on developing a comprehensive statewide communications strategy**.