



# POLICY AGENDA 2013-2014

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES



Twenty-three community colleges united by a shared vision that the opportunity for a quality higher education degree should be available to every individual, and through the success of those students in obtaining in-demand skills, will help to ensure a brighter future for Ohio.

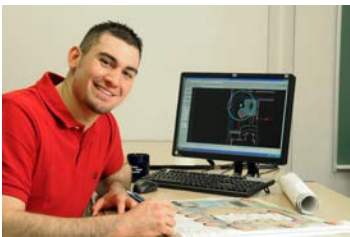


# OUR VALUES

OACC believes that every community college student is capable of achieving his or her educational aspirations. Recognizing that challenges exist that prevent both students and colleges from making this a reality, the OACC is committed to explicitly focusing on improving student retention and student success outcomes for students in all demographic and academic preparedness categories. To that end, OACC is committed to the implementation of policies and practices that advance the seven core values outlined below, not only having a positive impact on the more than 400,000 community college students, but also our local communities.



**College Access and Affordability:** OACC is committed to ensuring a community college education is accessible and affordable to students throughout Ohio.



**Program and Service Quality:** OACC is committed to ensuring the highest standards of program and service quality, and ensuring this quality is recognized both within the University System of Ohio and externally. This is a commitment ingrained in all OACC's policy values and priorities.



**Workforce Development:** Workforce Development is an important component of the community college mission, and OACC is committed to advancing state and federal policies which assist community colleges in meeting the workforce education and training needs of Ohio's employers and workers.



**Preparing Students for Transfer:** Preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions is another important part of the community college mission. The OACC is committed to advancing systemic alignment policies which ease students' transfer pathways to achieve their educational goals.



**Degrees & Certificates that Work:** Community colleges are uniquely positioned to help students meet the ever changing needs of a constantly evolving economy, and OACC is dedicated to ensuring that degree and industry-recognized certificate programs remain relevant and position students for immediate employment upon completion of these programs.

**Increasing Community College Efficiency & Effectiveness:** OACC is committed to the promotion and advancement of operational and academic efficiency and effectiveness within both the University System of Ohio and Ohio's Community College System.

**Support for Commercialization:** Community colleges are excellent at helping businesses and entrepreneurs apply new ideas from research and the community to commercialize new products and processes. The long term, local partnerships they form with businesses effectively support commercialization and start-up development.



## ***Increasing Student Success***

Community college open enrollment policies have enabled students who have completed high school with varying levels of academic preparation the opportunity to work toward achieving their higher education goals. Students attend community colleges with varied goals including certificate and degree completion, attainment of specific skills for employment, personal enrichment and more.

But times change. The nature of our economy is evolving at a rapid pace. It is abundantly clear that more and more of the jobs of today and tomorrow require an education beyond high school. The OACC supports the funding mechanism being developed by Ohio's public higher-education leaders that rewards institutions for encouraging more students to achieve recognized credentials.

Discussions surrounding "completion" should recognize the unique challenges faced by community colleges with their mission of open access, the high numbers of part-time students they serve, the significant differences of academic readiness students bring and the variety of different goals students pursue.

## ***State Needs-Based Financial Aid***

The current Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) structure results in the state assisting only those needy students who choose to attend higher-cost institutions, while leaving the responsibility for need-based aid for needy students attending low-cost community colleges completely to the federal Pell Grant program. This deprives community college students from accessing Pell grants to help with living expenses beyond tuition which often causes students not to complete.

The OACC believes that the state should play a role in need-based aid for community college students through a performance- and needs-based scholarship program that provides accountability and incentives for students based on academic results. The state should also consider establishing needs based aid to assist students seeking to train for employment in the high-demand industries of today and the future.

## ***Developmental Education Funding***

All students deserve access to post-secondary education including community colleges. However, some students who show up at the community-college campus need developmental education to enhance their college readiness.

If community colleges – as the entry point to higher education for many – need to help increase students' college readiness, community colleges need to have access to state funds to be able to perform this function.



## ***Community Colleges: A Great Value, A Great Education***

When compared to other institutions of higher education, Ohio's community colleges are setting the standard for efficiency. Despite a challenging fiscal environment and increasing demands such as the importance of workforce development, community colleges have kept tuition and expenses low.

Recognizing that efficiency is a continuous improvement process, and given that the demands for expanding workforce development are increasing in these tough economic times, Ohio's community colleges are committed to pursuing new cost-saving measures including group purchasing and insurance pooling.

## ***Workforce Development***

As institutions integrally involved with their partners in the business community on worker education, workforce development is an important part of the community college mission and an area that can be a key component of the economic development policy of the state.

The OACC is committed to advancing systemic alignment policies that ease students' pathways to achieve their educational goals and assuring accountability for high standards of quality.

## ***Commercialization***

Because community colleges are long term, local partners for business commercializing new technologies and processes, they help apply learning developed in other settings to create real world applications that accelerate the growth of businesses in Ohio. Community colleges should be centers in their communities for supporting technology transfer applications to the creation of new products and services by their local businesses.

*DRAFT: Updated Jan. 2, 2013.*

