

Annotated Summary of Good Policy, Good Practice
Improving Outcomes and Productivity in Higher Education: A Guide for Policymakers
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Overview: The purpose of this paper is to provide policy leaders examples of experience from around the country to raise the higher education attainment of state residents even in the face of fiscal constraints. The paper provides specific examples of strategies, programs and practices to raise educational productivity by enhancing higher education opportunity, educational effectiveness and cost effectiveness. In addition, the paper describes the levers that policymakers can use to influence those improvements.

Part 1: Strategies for Increasing Educational Attainment



Annotations for Washington Policy or Practice as of 2009:



Statewide implementation or common practice at most colleges



Practice common for at least several colleges or state policy under consideration

Not a policy in Washington or a practice at few or no colleges

Strategy 1: Improve productivity in the Educational Pipeline

A. Preparation of traditional age students (18 to 24) by:

1) *Increasing high school rigor* by encouraging rigorous coursework in high school



Examples:

- **Indiana Core 40 Scholars Initiative** is a rigorous sequence of high school classes covering English, social studies, math, science, physical education, and electives.
- **Distance Delivery in South Dakota** offers advanced high school courses via distance delivery to small high schools throughout the state.
- **Middle College Charter High School** provides a personalized learning environment connecting high school students to the worlds of college and work.

2) *Gauging college readiness* by identifying gaps in preparation so they can address deficiencies while still in high school.



Examples:

- **California State University (CSU) Early Assessment Program** identifies college-level knowledge and skills and encourages high school juniors to participate in a voluntary assessment to determine their college readiness.
- **California Part** participate in regional consortia to collect, analyze, and share data to evaluate: preparedness for the next level of education; number of students earning degrees; curriculum changes to improve student performance.
- **ACT Assessments** gives the ACT college entrance or assessment exams to high school juniors in 5 states so students can identify academic weaknesses and take courses in their senior year to improve college readiness.

3) *Enhancing Teacher Quality*, particularly as it relates to college readiness



Examples:

- **California State University (CSU) Early Assessment Program** includes a teacher-quality component allowing faculty members to identify student problems in writing and reading comprehension.
- **EveryTeacher**, South Dakota's Teacher Quality Enhancement Project, is a K–20 collaboration to increase the content knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers.

4) *Encouraging Acceleration* by enrolling prepared high school students in college-level courses through Advanced Placement Policies and Dual Enrollment.



Advanced Placement Policy Examples:

- **Advanced Placement Incentive Program** in the Dallas Independent School District awards prizes to students (ranging from \$100 to \$500) for each AP exam on which they earn a score of three or higher.
- **Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement Act** in Florida helps students achieve passing scores on AP exams.

Advanced Placement Policy Examples:

- **Washington's Running Start** allows students to take college courses in high school.
- **College Now** at the City University of New York (CUNY) is the "largest public urban dual enrollment program" in the country.
- **Syracuse University's Project Advance (SUPA)** spans 134 high schools in New York, New Jersey, Maine, Massachusetts, and Michigan.
- **The Early College High School Initiative**, run by Jobs for the Future, helps to establish 250 small schools allowing students to earn a high school diploma and an associate's degree (or up to two years of college credit) in five years.

- B. **Preparation of nontraditional college-age students** by encouraging adults to complete their high-school education and offering a specialized postsecondary curriculum targeted at those who have not recently participated in an educational program.



Examples:

- **Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE)** contracts with schools, colleges, and other organizations to encourage adults to complete high school and enroll in postsecondary education or to improve literacy.
- **The Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST)** program teaches adults language and vocational skills simultaneously at community colleges in Washington.

- C. **Persistence and completion of traditional college-age students** to ensure new students take a substantial number of credits early to improve their chances of completing a degree by developing learning communities and other ways of connecting students.



Examples:

- **It All Adds Up** allows freshmen at the University of New Mexico to join a math learning community and participate in peer advising.
- **Kingsborough Community College** in Brooklyn, New York, allows students to take linked courses as a cohort.
- **Broward Community College** allows incoming students to enroll in a 3-credit student success course in groups of 25 where “success coaches” work with students.

- D. **Persistence and completion of nontraditional college-age students**, particularly low-income adults by:

1) *Providing financial incentives.*



Examples:

- **Opening Doors** in Louisiana targets low-income parents enrolled in community colleges
- **Lifelong Learning Accounts** in Illinois helps adult students finance their education by providing a match to student contributions using state funds.

2) *Providing incentives for re-entry.*



Example:

- **The University of New Mexico** created a pathway for former students, tracked down nearly 2,000 former non-completing students and attracted them back.

- E. **Encouraging articulation and transfer** without repeating courses or losing time by providing common exams for basic skills, common cut scores for placement into college-level work, articulation agreements, and counseling and advising mechanisms and tools.




Guaranteed Admission Examples:

- **Florida** law guarantees admission to state universities to all community college AA graduates and has a common course numbering system and online student advising.
- **North Carolina** has an articulation agreement between the 2-year system and UNC, and has a general education core accepted across all higher education institutions.
- **Virginia's 2005 Restructuring Act** required four-year institutions to formalize or begin negotiating new transfer and articulation agreements with state colleges.

Proficiency Approach Examples:

- **City University of New York** requires students with less than 45 credits seeking admission to a baccalaureate program to demonstrate skills proficiency via standardized entrance tests or Basic Skills tests.
- **South Dakota** transfer students are required to take the same proficiency exam that is administered to all students in the four-year system.

Strategy 2: Redesign Policies to Enhance Educational Productivity

- A. **Remove state subsidies from unproductive majors** to steer resources to the most efficient and productive academic programs. 


Examples:

- **Ohio's Selective Excellence program** allowed institutions to earn additional discretionary resources when those resources increased investments in any one academic unit by more than the incremental increase in funds.
- **The Illinois Priorities, Quality, and Productivity (PQP) program** eliminated duplicative or unproductive programs based on guidelines for program productivity.

- B. **Reengineer Curricula and Courses** by:


1) *Redesigning the curriculum* by:

- Establishing a 120-credit hour limit on degree requirements, with some exceptions
- Creating a core curriculum of specifically designed and aligned courses

2) *Reengineering the delivery of large courses* to incorporate technology at many institutions and for many courses and implemented at a system level. 

- C. **Target academic policies to improve quality and efficiency** by:

1) *Reducing presenting the same material to the same students multiple times* by:

- Reducing the time period for no-penalty drops, rather than allowing students to drop courses without academic penalty 

- Limiting the number of times a student can enroll in the same course rather than allowing students to repeat completed courses for higher grades
- Counting all credits a student has enrolled in against the maximum number that will be underwritten with state funds.

2) *Creating incentives for degree completion*



Examples:

- **Oklahoma** rewards institutions for improving degree production.
- **The Missouri Funding for Results (FFR) program**, rewarded institutions for graduating students in selected fields and for those placing well on national exams.
- **Bundy Aid Program** in NY rewards institutions for graduating state residents.

D. **Create policies that reward demonstration of academic proficiency**, such as:



- *Allowing students to test out of courses and gain shortcuts to their degrees by:*
- *Allowing on-the-job learning to gain credits toward a degree*

Strategy 3: Use and expand facilities to meet state goals

A. **Ensure an adequate supply of undergraduate teaching**



Examples:

- **New Community College Systems in Kentucky, Indiana, and Louisiana** were created to enhance access for historically underserved populations.
- **Nevada State College** was created to accommodate enrollment growth at a per-student cost that was less expensive than the existing four-year institutions in the state.
- **Caps in Louisiana and Indiana** limit undergraduate enrollments in research universities and redirect those students to less expensive institutions.

B. **Promote collaboration among colleges and universities** to increase productivity by allowing residents in one area to access another institution's programs not offered locally.



Examples:

- **Oklahoma** established geographic "responsibility areas" where each institution identified unmet needs and responded to them by collaborating with other institutions.
- **North Dakota's** two-year campuses offer a joint degree program in nursing where participating institutions offer some courses, and the delivery site moves among campuses, so that the program is offered periodically in rural parts of the state.
- **Kentucky's** Jefferson Community College contracts with a neighboring college to offer health programs at that college, avoiding startup costs for the programs there.

C. **Support year-round operations** making better use of existing instructional resources by:

- 1) *Providing full subsidies for year-round study*
- 2) *Providing concrete incentives for faculty to teach and students to enroll in slack enrollment periods, and*
- 3) *Providing tuition discounts or bonuses for early degree completion*



D. **Create new educational providers** based on an alternative model.

Examples:

- **British Open University (BOU)** uses a centralized model where full-time faculty develop centralized courses and assessment design and adjunct faculty teach.
- **The Western Governors University (WGU)** allows students to demonstrate their college-level abilities at any time so they may progress, whether or not they have completed specific courses.



Part 2: Levers for Policy Leadership

A. **Planning and Leadership that requires:**

- 1) *Clarity and consensus of goals*
- 2) *Persistence in making substantive changes*
- 3) *Publicly reporting progress in attaining objectives*
- 4) *Linking actions and results to objectives*

B. **Financial Policies**

- 1) ***Allocations to institutions that provide stability, protect base resources and provide for inflation.*** Incentives should:
 - Reward institutions for courses completed
 - Increase the number of transfer students
 - Decrease the number of credits by graduating students
 - Allocate savings from productivity initiatives to fund further initiatives
 - Increase the proportion of credit hours generated through non-traditional means (OJT or testing out, for example)
- 2) ***Tuition policy should create:***
 - Affordable tuition by linking charges to changes in family income
 - Refund policies discouraging students from dropping or adding courses
 - Policies that penalize students for enrolling for excessive credits
 - Rebates for students who take fewer than standard hours to graduate
 - Tuition policies to encourage summer or weekend enrollments

- 3) *Student Financial Aid* should be targeted to
- a. Avoid loans until students are in the last half of their academic program
 - b. Provide increased financial aid for students completing an entire transfer curriculum or associate's degree before transferring
 - c. Make college prep curriculum a condition for financial aid for high school students
 - d. Ensure low-income students are a priority for financial aid
 - e. Make aid available for part-time adult students
 - f. Make the state responsible for distributing financial aid, not the institutions

C. Regulatory Policies should be analyzed to assess their impact of implementing strategies for productivity enhancements.

Examples:

- **Improve Productivity in the Educational Pipeline** by:
 - Limiting the number of state-sponsored credit hours required for a degree.
 - Encouraging the earning of credit through alternative means.
 - Requiring program review and assessments of content alignment.
 - Discouraging large numbers of course drops and adds.
 - Discouraging students from taking the same course multiple times with the intent of improving their grade point average.
 - Allowing remedial work to be tailored to specific student shortcomings.
- **Redesign State/Campus Policies to Enhance Educational Productivity** by:
 - Emphasizing completion of a degree, not time-to-degree
 - Making college-readiness expectations clear to high school students
 - Encouraging delivery of courses at times and places that meet student needs.
 - Removing barriers to articulation and transfer, and offering statewide transfer “guarantees” joint admissions between two and four-year institutions.

Counterproductive regulatory policies are:

- Prohibiting the combining of academic and vocational skills training.
 - Requiring that all institutional credits be earned “in residence.”
 - Employing policies that value “seat time” over demonstration of learning.
 - Specifying maximum allowable credits earned by transfer, testing out, etc.
- **Use and Expand Facilities to Meet State Goals** by:
 - Constraining “mission creep.
 - Eliminating overly protective service area designations.
 - Allowing new nonpublic competitor institutions via program approval and financial aid policies.
 - Encouraging new institutions with alternative service delivery, particularly in high-demand fields.
 - Encouraging joint use of facilities.

D. **Accountability Reports** should communicate priorities related to broadening access, improving quality and reducing cost.

Examples:

- **Improve Measures of Access** by examining participation rates in relation to the base population each institution is charged to serve.
- **Construct Progression/Completion Measures** to show contributions to overall student flow at each stage of the postsecondary process, including entry, completing the first and second years of study, and completing a credential. Needed for this are:
 - *State student-unit record systems* from K–12 through postsecondary education and into the workplace or graduate study.
 - *A qualifications framework* defining generic skills standards across occupations and postsecondary credentials to ensure that they are aligned.
 - *Policy capacity* at the state level to convert data into metrics for tracking progress.
- **Improve Assessments of Direct Learning Outcomes** by:
 - Using the National Forum on College-Level Learning’s three-part approach to collecting *statewide measures of learning* with these key elements:
 1. Results of national assessments of literacy administered to residents who graduated from college in the state.
 2. Additional assessments of student performance administered to samples of the state’s about-to-graduate student population at two- and four-year institutions.
 - *Performance on professional licensure examinations and graduate admissions tests*, such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).
 - Ensuring that institutions have *quality-assessment policies* and use *outcome results* to improve programs by partnering with regional accrediting organizations.
 - Investing in *institutional assessment capacity* through training and convening.
- **Use Evidence from the Workplace** to link with the state’s workforce needs like:
 - *Earnings of college graduates by program*
 - *Employer feedback systems*

E. **Governance** should:

- *Place policy leadership for adult/workforce literacy in an agency that is responsible for postsecondary education.*
- *Allow equal voice* for all teaching institutions
- *Foster cooperation among trustees and regents* so productivity and affordability are higher priorities.

To see the full report - **Good Policy, Good Practice: Improving Outcomes and Productivity in Higher Education: A Guide for Policymakers** -By Patrick M. Callan, Peter T. Ewell, Joni E. Finney, and Dennis P. Jones – see <http://www.nchems.org/pubs/detail.php?id=106> -