Accounting for and Conveying Institutional and Student Success

Re-Visioning the VSA

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Voluntary System of Accountability

Initiative by public universities to supply straightforward, comparable information on the undergraduate student experience through a common web report – the College Portrait.

www.collegeportraits.org
VSA Overview

• Developed, launched in 2007
  – 70 institutions, 80 leaders
  – APLU and AASCU partnership

• Three original objectives
  – Demonstrate accountability, transparency
  – College search tool
  – Support innovation in the measurement, reporting of student learning outcomes

• 315 participating public universities
Evaluating Project Effectiveness

- Student Learning Outcomes pilot project ends December 2012
  - Directly measure, publicly report learning gains (value-added) using a common method
  - Tests: CAAP, CLA, ETS Proficiency Profile
- Evaluated by NILOA in Spring 2012
  - Expand assessment tools, approaches
  - Focus on communication, specific audiences
CHALLENGES

• Urgency created by Spellings muted
  – Participation steady since 2010

• Leadership turnover; campus fiscal constraints

• Standardized tests lack broad credibility
  – 50% of College Portraits have no SLO

• Lack of resources to compete with established college search tools
OPPORTUNITIES

• Project financially sound
• Traffic to CP website at all time high - up 40% since 2011, up 90% since 2009
• Accountability and transparency remain important at national, state level
  – VSA part of state, system accountability: OH, IN, UNC, CSU, U of WI
• Success and progress rate emerging as valuable alternative to federal grad rate
• VSA effort credited with advancing SLO work
Next Steps for SLO Reporting

- VSA participants describe, publish pilot project experiences to fulfill participation agreement
  - Required for institutions with no SLO results currently published
  - Strongly encouraged for all institutions

- New instrument options for 2012-13:
  - CAAP, CLA, ETS Proficiency Profile
  - AAC&U VALUE rubrics – critical thinking, written communication

- Reporting options: value-added, benchmarking
NEW COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

• Re-focus from “college selection tool” to “consumer information tool to demonstrate effectiveness of educational programs”
  – Develop outreach strategy to recruit new participants and connect with key audiences
  – Identify, promote, expand key elements on College Portrait – success and progress rate additional cohorts
  – Create streamlined view targeted at policy makers, government affairs professionals
BOTTOM LINE

• Unprecedented challenges for public higher education to be more accountable and more transparent concerning results
• Work to position the VSA/College Portrait as a tool to respond to those challenges
MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS

Reports & Presentations
www.voluntarysystem.org

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The Voluntary Framework of Accountability

for community colleges, by community colleges
VOLUNTARY FRAMEWORK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

» Initiative managed by AACC

» Partners
  ◆ ACCT
  ◆ College Board

» Funders
  ◆ Lumina Foundation for Education
  ◆ Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
The Voluntary Framework of Accountability is the first national system of accountability specifically *for* community colleges and *by* community colleges.
The Voluntary Framework of Accountability

- Landscape
- Need for the VFA
- Process for developing the VFA
- The VFA metrics
- Benefits of the VFA
- Challenges
- Actions to Take
THE CONTEXT: FROM ACCESS TO COMPLETION
Historically, community colleges, and to some extent all of higher education, have focused on access.

Changing landscape: completion
We urge the creation of a robust culture of accountability and transparency throughout higher education. Every one of our goals, from improving access and affordability to enhancing quality and innovation, will be more easily achieved if higher education institutions embrace and implement serious accountability measures.”

Source: A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education A Report of the Commission Appointed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings
“By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world... So tonight I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training... every American will need to get more than a high school diploma.”

-President Barack Obama

Address to Joint Session of Congress
February 24, 2009
“[Community colleges have] been unable to tell our story in a meaningful way. We are great at what we do, but we don’t have data to tell that story.”

-Joe May, President, Louisiana Community and Technical College System
(Chronicle of Higher Education, April 11, 2011)
Plethora of reporting and accountability models but…existing measurements are limited

Graduation rate not the right tool for measuring community college success

Existing measures do not capture value of full range of community college offerings, like noncredit courses or CTE

Despite importance to U.S. economy, community colleges lack comprehensive way to tell our story
Community colleges need to define the measures against which they should be held accountable.

Community colleges want to be accountable, but by using the appropriate measures.

Community colleges need to have a common set of measures that can be of use for benchmarking.

Measures need to tell the story of what community colleges do while maintaining rigor and assessing quality.
The first national accountability framework designed *for* community colleges, *by* community colleges.
The first national accountability framework designed for community colleges, by community colleges.

- Steering Committee: 20 college leaders
The first national accountability framework designed for community colleges, by community colleges.

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- Working groups: 36 college leaders
The first national accountability framework designed for community colleges, by community colleges.

- Steering Committee: 20 college leaders
- Working groups: 36 college leaders
- Pilot sites: 40 sites representing 58 colleges
The VFA is composed of measures in 3 broad areas:

- Student Progress and Outcomes
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- Workforce, Economic, and Community Development Outcomes
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- Student Progress and Outcomes
- Workforce, Economic, and Community Development Outcomes
- Student Learning Outcomes
Student Tracking for SPO Measures

- The VFA Cohort
- The VFA Sub-cohort
- Disaggregation
STUDENT PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES (SPO) MEASURES

Developmental Education Progress Measures

- % of students referred that attempted their first math, English, or reading developmental education course
- % of students referred that completed highest level math, English, or reading developmental education course
- % of students referred that completed any college-level course in math, English, or reading
- % of students referred that completed all developmental education
Using Developmental Metrics

Level of Developmental Need

- Math
  - 3 or more levels below: 80%
  - 2 levels below: 30%
  - 1 level below: 20%

- English/reading
  - 3 or more levels below: 60%
  - 2 levels below: 40%
  - 1 level below: 30%

Developmental Math Outcomes

- Attempted Any Developmental Math: 100%
- Completed Highest Developmental Math: 90%
- Completed College Level Math: 10%
Two-Year Progress Measures

- % of credit hours successfully completed in the first term of the cohort
- % of students who reached credit thresholds by end of year two (24=part-time; 42=full-time)
- % of students who were retained from fall (term one) to their next academic term or completed a formal award
- % of students who reached year two outcomes as follows:
  - Completed certificate or degree
  - Transferred to a 2-year or 4-year institution
  - Still enrolled at initial institution
- % of credit hours successfully completed at end of year two
Six-Year Outcomes Measures

- % of students who earned an associate’s degree – without transfer
- % of students who earned an associate’s degree – with transfer
- % of students who earned an award of less than associate’s degree (certificate) – with transfer
- % of students who earned an award of less than associate’s degree (certificate) – without transfer
- % of students who transferred to another post-secondary institution, with no degree or certificate
- % of students who were still enrolled during the sixth academic year
- % of students who left institution without an award and without transfer having earned 30 or more semester credit hours (or equivalent)
- % of students who left institution without an award and without transfer having earned less than 30 semester credit hours (or equivalent)
SIX-YEAR OUTCOMES

[Chart showing outcomes for different categories: Left - Everybody Else, No Award - Still Enrolled, No Award - 30+ credits, Certificate - No Transfer, Certificate - Transfer, AD - No Transfer, AD - Transfer. The chart compares Total and Credential Seeking categories.]
“COMPLETERS” (AWARD OR TRANSFER)
Student Tracking of WECD Measures

- Outcomes that examine what happens upon leaving the institution
- Completers/Leavers: who are these students?
Career and Technical Education (CTE)

- Number of awards in CTE
- Licensure exam passing rate
- % of CTE students that complete a program (both credit and non-credit) or earned 90 contact hours and are employed with a livable wage
- Median wage growth of CTE students

Non-Credit Courses

- Non-credit workforce enrollment
- Number of state/industry-recognized credentials
- Transition from non-credit to credit

Adult Basic Education / GED

- % of students who complete ABE / GED
- % of ABE / GED students who enroll in more education
- % of ABE / GED students who gain employment
Colleges will be asked to share their SLO activities based on a transparency framework developed by the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

Goals:
- transparency; and
- developing a common understanding of broad-based institutional measures of learning that colleges can use to demonstrate quality.

Next:
- Evaluate the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP): Using the associate degree as a starting point, a team will be assembled to begin defining expectations for what an associate degree recipient should have in terms of competencies and skills.
Providing Evidence of Student Learning: A Transparency Framework

Components of Student Learning Assessment

http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/TransparencyFrameworkIntro.htm
» Planning (completed fall 2008 to summer 2009)

» Developing Measures (completed Sept. 2009 to Dec. 2011)

◆ Outcomes:
  - The VFA Metrics Manual to define/instruct calculation of measures and report transparently student learning outcomes
  - A blueprint and design specifications of a data collection, display, benchmarking, and analytics tool
  - The results of pilot testing the initial measures
  - The strategic VFA Communications Plan for college participation, engagement in, and growth of the VFA
BUILDING & IMPLEMENTING (starts in early 2012; data tool available in 2013)

» Parts of Building and Implementing

- Develop data tool; research & development and maintenance (of data tool and of metrics and methodologies);

- Round One of “Go Live”

- Develop support services, training curriculum/materials, do training, provide help

- Strategic Outreach Development and Sustainability (increase # of participants; deepen influence / impact of VFA)
HOW CAN WE USE THE VFA FOR MY COLLEGE?
BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES
BIG BENEFIT: VFA METRICS PROVIDE DATA ON MISSION-DRIVEN OUTCOMES

It will help us to better assess our own performance and identify areas for improvement

- Completing developmental education and being successful at college level work.
- Transfer
- Career and Technical Education and workplace training
- ABE/GED
- Non-credit workforce preparation
- Credential attainment
HOW THE VFA WILL BENEFIT OUR INSTITUTIONS?

» Tracking relevant outcomes informs conversations and decisions: internally and externally

» It will enable us to communicate the full breadth of our academic mission and show our commitment to it, such as showcasing our role in workforce, economic, and community development

» It will help us communicate our value to community members and local, state, and regional policymakers and enable us to more easily collaborate to promote positive policy changes at the state and federal levels.

» It will help our efforts to secure grants and public funding.
Ultimately, it will enable us to tell our story and show our value.
Challenges provide the greatest opportunities for benefits we can achieve with the VFA

- Lots of reporting requirements, not a lot of bandwidth… but by replacing other accountability measures the VFA stands to streamline reporting requirements.
“We believe the VFA can be the foundational accountability framework for our colleges for now and into the future.”

-Walter G. Bumphus, President and CEO, American Association of Community Colleges
ACTIONS TO TAKE AND GETTING STARTED
» Metrics can be used today to look at your college

» Determine where to start

- Do you want to look at all measures or focus on a particular area?
- Without benchmarks, multi-year analysis may be a useful approach to see change over time
- Are intra-campus comparisons appropriate at my college?
- CTE metrics will depend on external wage data matches
Do we have the data available we need?

- Is noncredit CTE data collected and stored in a manner that will allow us to calculate these metrics?
- Is ABE and/or GED prep data collected to allow outcomes tracking?
- Can we get UI-wage data (or similar)?
- How accessible would this data be to front-line decision makers?
HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AND PROMOTING THE VFA WITHIN STATE

» VFA success will ultimately rely on broad-based community college participation

» Your support and promotion of the VFA will be critical

» If states modify, upgrade, change accountability reporting – adoption of the VFA metrics will decrease burden

Right Framework, used for multiple purposes
RESOURCES
www.aacc.nche.edu/vfa

» VFA Webinars

» VFA Measures Overview

» VFA Presentation

» VFA Key Points
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Student Achievement Metric

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Director of Federal Relations and Policy Analysis, AASCU

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Student Achievement Measure

Collaborative effort by APLU, AASCU, AAU, AACC, NAICU, ACE to publicly report a more accurate measure of student outcomes.

Characteristics of measure:

• Based on Success and Progress Rate from VSA and Student Progress and Outcomes Measure from VFA
• Uses data from the National Student Clearinghouse
• Tracks enrollments, completions across multiple institutions
Student Groups & Reporting Periods

4-yr Institutions

• Cohorts
  – First-time, full-time
  – Full-time transfer in

• Reporting period
  – 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year

2-yr Institutions

• Cohorts
  – First-time, full-time

• Reporting period
  – 6-year
4-year Institution Outcomes

1. Graduated from original institution
2. Transferred then Graduated from subsequent institution
3. Still Enrolled at original institution
4. Transferred then Enrolled at subsequent institution
5. Current Status Unknown
2-year Institution Outcomes

1. **Graduated** from original institution
2. **Still Enrolled** at original institution
3. **Transferred** to subsequent institution
4. **Current Status Unknown**
University of North Carolina at Asheville
Fall 2005: Full-time Transfer-In Students

- After 6 years:
  - Graduated: UNC Asheville: 68%
  - Transferred & Graduated: Other Institution: 15%
  - Transferred: Other Institution: 1%
  - Enrolled: UNC Asheville: 13%
  - Current Status Unknown: 3%

- After 5 years:
  - Graduated: UNC Asheville: 67%
  - Transferred & Graduated: Other Institution: 13%
  - Transferred: Other Institution: 3%
  - Enrolled: UNC Asheville: 6%
  - Current Status Unknown: 11%

- After 4 years:
  - Graduated: UNC Asheville: 61%
  - Transferred & Graduated: Other Institution: 9%
  - Transferred: Other Institution: 9%
  - Enrolled: UNC Asheville: 11%
  - Current Status Unknown: 10%
Next Steps

• Fall 2012
  – Form working group, establish framework
  – Seek outside funding (Gates very positive)

• Spring 2013
  – Build website infrastructure, design/test display
  – Encourage volunteer participation by institutions

• Early Summer 2013
  – Institutions submit data through website
  – Website unveiled to public
Questions