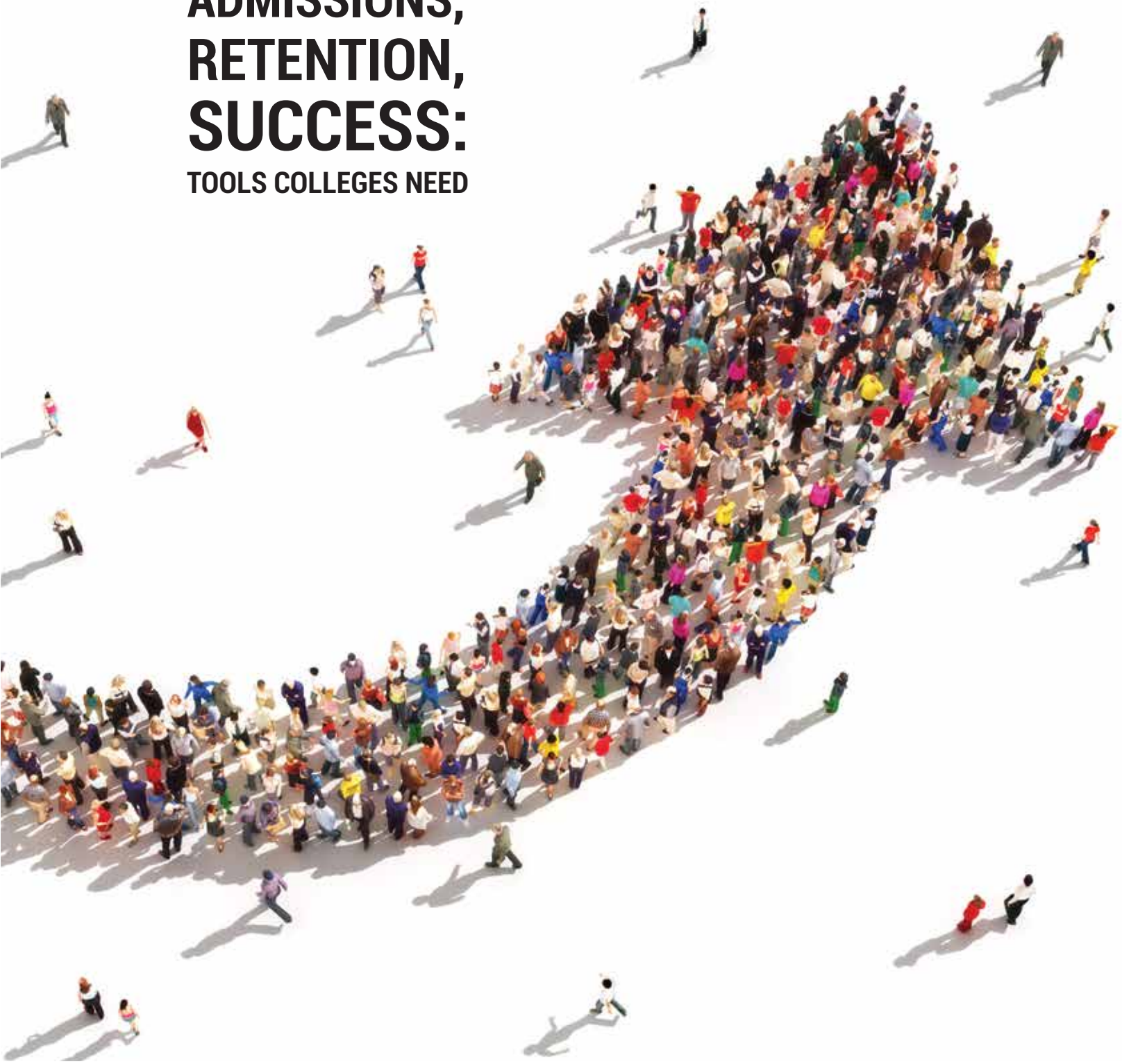
ADMISSIONS, RETENTION, SUCCESS:

TOOLS COLLEGES NEED



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Greater diversity in high school graduates coupled with the increasing number of non-traditional students necessitates that institutions evolve their enrollment and retention strategies. Today's incoming student is digital savvy, expects self-service, and needs to be able to communicate from many devices. Modern students expect institutions to provide the tools and support to ensure that they secure the necessary skills and competencies to prepare them for a successful life and rewarding career.

Institutions across the country are seeing students arrive on campus, or in their online courses ill-prepared for college-level coursework. In fact, nearly 60% of students need remediation[1]. In addition, students often end up taking courses not related to their degree program; or they are unsure about which degree program is even best for their interests and skills. Consequently, over 40% of students who begin college, or a program, never graduate[2].

Now is the time for your institution to evaluate your recruitment, academic planning, advising, and career services to not only keep students on the path to completion but also assist with creating a clear line of sight to internships and jobs. Jenzabar understands these challenges and provides software, services, and strategies to empower students and support institutional initiatives that increase their success.

Jenzabar Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) was designed with these challenges in mind. Jenzabar GPS is a data-driven platform that helps your institution address college readiness, retention, on-time graduation, and career preparedness. This system empowers students to turn their interests into rewarding careers.

"When students are connected to a career, it helps them stick to their coursework", said Amy LaBaugh, Vice President of Student Life at Brigham Young University-Idaho. "They have a greater understanding of the purpose of their academics. Jenzabar GPS takes students from 'Are you prepared for college courses?' to 'Here are pathways available to you.' It's a robust solution that supports the entire student lifecycle. It encompasses everything a student needs to do to be successful in one system."

At Jenzabar collaboration is at the heart of our culture. Jenzabar associates come from higher education with our typical client-serving associate having over 20 years of higher education experience. We understand your unique needs and know what it takes to turn your efforts into results. We develop products in close partnership with our clients, ensuring that our solutions are user-centric and tailored for what you need now, what's on the horizon, and where higher education is moving in the future.

We hope this collection of articles written by esteemed experts provide you with information and resources in the areas of guided pathways, enrollment, student success, and completion. There are many avenues to explore that may have a tremendous impact on your campus.

Sincerely,

Eileen

Eileen Smith
Vice President, Marketing and Communications
Jenzabar

1 Source: Beyond the Rhetoric. National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. highereducation.org/reports/college_readiness/gap.shtml
2 Source: The Condition of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/

For more information on Jenzabar Guided Pathways to Success, visit jenzabar.com/guided-pathways.

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Introduction

Increasingly educators realize that enrollment is about more than admissions, and that education is about more than credits completed. The focus is increasingly on the path from admission to retention to graduation to post-graduation success. And many colleges are trying to link these once separate goals.

The articles in this compilation explore an array of strategies at various colleges and universities on these issues. Colleges aren't always succeeding the first time out, but are experimenting and refining their approaches.

Inside Higher Ed will continue to cover these issues. We welcome your thoughts on this compilation and your ideas for future coverage.

--The Editors
editor@insidehighered.com

News

A selection of articles by Inside Higher Ed reporters

Ninth-Grade Marks as Predictor of College Success

BY SCOTT JASCHIK // SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

Study finds that educators can tell quite a bit from the freshman year -- and that colleges may be able to use this information in recruiting.

Many colleges try hard to identify potential talent -- especially from disadvantaged areas -- early in high school. In many cases, they use test scores to identify those with potential. And in many cases, high school students, their parents and counselors, and the college admissions officers who evaluate their credentials focus heavily on junior year grade point average -- or changes in GPA from year to year.

New research from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research suggests that the ninth-grade GPA may be much more significant than many previously thought -- and may provide insights on how colleges and others should act. This may be particularly the case when colleges are trying to identify those in low-income areas.

The consortium studied the ninth-grade marks of 187,335 students in the Chicago Public Schools who were freshmen from 2006 through 2013. Students at charter and other special high schools were excluded. The sample was 51 percent black and 37 percent Latino. The researchers then followed these students for up to six years, to look at relationships between ninth-grade grades and high school graduation and college enrollment.

Among the findings:

• There was "a strong relationship" between GPA in ninth and 11th grades, with most students having roughly the same grades in both years.

• Ninth-grade marks predicted whether students would graduate. "Very few F students ended up graduating in four or five years, whereas almost all students with freshman A, B, and C-average GPAs ended up graduating on time," the research report says.

• The relationship continues when predicting whether a student will go to college. "About 18 percent of students who had an F freshman GPA went on to college. About 35

percent of students with D's went to college; about 50 percent of students with C's did. B and A students fared better: 60 percent of B students went to college and 70 percent of A students did. The relationship between freshman GPA and college-going is more linear and incremental than the relationship between freshman GPA and high school graduation, where avoiding F's made a big difference in the likelihood of graduating."

- When examining only students who did enroll in college, the study found that ninth grade marks also predicted retention through the end of freshman year of college.

In each analysis, the study found that the grades were better at predicting the various levels of academic success than were standardized tests.

The report concludes by noting reasons why grades may be particularly powerful predictors, even from just the first year of high school.

"Grades have been criticized for being 'subjective,' suggesting that teachers apply an uneven or non-objective set of standards when they assign grades. This research did not directly address the question of how much subjectivity there is in grades, but it did show that grades do include an objective achievement component, even though schools and teachers do not use standardized criteria in grading. It is likely that factors such as effort, behavior and attitude, for example, are influencing grades," the report says. "But this does not detract from the validity of grades; in fact, these other factors are likely to be contributing to the validity of grades: in addition to content knowledge as measured by standardized tests, teachers appear to be accurately measuring other important skills and characteristics of students."

The authors of the report are John Q. Easton, vice president of programs at the Spencer Foundation; Esperanza Johnson, a program associate at Spencer; and Lauren Sartain, senior research associate at the University of Chicago Consortium.

Via email, Easton said that he believed that other large school districts would have similar results. He said that he did not want anyone to think that what happens after ninth grade isn't important. "It's more that a successful freshman year paves the way for future success," he said.

As for colleges, he said, "The findings might suggest that colleges could be scouting freshmen, keeping their eyes on them throughout high school, and even perhaps supporting them. Maybe some college prep organizations should focus on freshmen, keep them on track and get them into good colleges. The biggest takeaway is that a successful freshman year smooths the way for future success in high school and after." ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2017/09/25/study-finds-ninth-grade-marks-predict-college-enrollment-and-success

How a Tech-Oriented University Boosted Female Enrollment

BY SCOTT JASCHIK // AUGUST 21, 2017

WPI saw the female share of its incoming class go from 34 percent to 43 percent in a year -- after adjusting aid policy.

WPI

In an era when women dominate undergraduate enrollments nationally, engineering and technologically oriented institutions are the exception. Male students are still in the majority, sometimes by a substantial margin.

The class of new students enrolling at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, however, shows that it is possible to make real gains. Of entering freshmen, 43 percent are women. Last year the total was 34 percent and it had been edging up, by about a percentage point a year, in the years prior to that.

Laurie Leshin, president of WPI, said in an interview that she didn't just want to creep upward, but to make a real move. Leshin instituted one new policy in this admissions

cycle that had a major impact -- combined with a policy started 10 years ago. Here's how WPI changed its enrollment makeup.

Leshin characterized the approach as "words and action" -- encouraging women to apply, but also matching that with concrete policy.

The key change this year is that Leshin decided to reallocate $1 million that WPI had been using for appeals of non-need-based aid awards. That's only about 4.4 percent of the aid budget for freshmen over all, but shifting the funds away from these appeals allowed WPI to be more generous to top female candidates, and it appears to have worked. (Many experts on aid criticize the use of such appeals funds anyway, saying that they are more likely to benefit families who know how to negotiate than those with need.)

Ultimately, she said, WPI should be 50 percent female. "We shouldn't settle for anything less" than 50 percent, she said. This year's goal was 40 percent, and Leshin said the additional aid made the difference this year in making real progress.

Leshin said that male students want to see gender equity at WPI, and she has received no pushback for the shift. If a few students who in years past would have managed to get more non-need-based aid on appeal decided to enroll elsewhere, Leshin said she's OK with that.

The yield for admitted female applicants this year was 30 percent -- up from 24 percent, where it had been for several years.

Sticking With Test Optional

If the shift in aid funds was new this year, and helped on yield, there is also a 10-year-old policy that continues to help the university attract more female applicants (and underrepresented minority applicants).

A decade ago, WPI dropped a requirement that applicants submit SAT or ACT scores. Many liberal arts colleges had already done so, and many more have done so since. But WPI was unusual in that the test-optional movement has made relatively little ground at science and technology-oriented universities.

WPI has seen no issues with retention or graduation rates as a result of the shift, but it has seen a steady diversification of its applicant pool -- and this year's shift in aid might not have had the same impact without that diversification in who was applying.

During the last 10 years, applications to WPI have increased by 81 percent. Applications from women are up 99 percent during that time, and applications from underrepresented minority students are up 146 percent. The figure for underrepresented minority women is 123 percent.

During that time period, 30 percent of female applicants have opted not to submit test scores, as have 22 percent of underrepresented minority applicants. During the previous decade, 25 percent of applications were from women and 12 percent from underrepresented minority students, suggesting that the policy had a strong impact on those groups. ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2017/08/21/wpi-sees-notable-gains-female-enrollment-after-shift-use-non-need

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Making Marquette More Diverse

BY SCOTT JASCHIK // MAY 8, 2017

To attract Latino students, university links to a network of Catholic high schools, builds transfer relationships with community colleges, and adds Spanish-speaking staffers.

Yield always matters, but sometimes it is a subset of yield that may be most important to a college.

This year Marquette University had 2,056 deposits on May 3 (it prefers this date for comparison purposes, not the May 1 date common elsewhere). That's up 2 percent from a year ago.

But what John M. Baworowsky, vice president for enrollment management, is really excited about are the numbers of Latino students. About a year ago, Marquette set itself a goal of becoming designated a Hispanic-serving institution within a decade. That would require, among other things, that at least a quarter of undergraduates are Latinos. Last year, Marquette was about halfway there, with Latino students making up 13 percent of the entering class. The goal was to go up by one percentage point a year. But this year, the entering class is 16 percent Latino, far exceeding the 14 percent goal.

For Marquette, diversifying has both practical and idealistic parts. From a pragmatic perspective, the university has traditionally drawn its students from largely white Roman Catholic families in Wisconsin and neighboring states. But many students and families are

less focused today than in previous generations on going to a college that reflects their faith. And both national and Roman Catholic demographics see sharp growths in the Latino population. The university's Jesuit ideals also call it to seek out those who could benefit but might not automatically land in Milwaukee.

As Baworowsky describes the strategies used by Marquette, they are part "go where the students are" and part a willingness to change the university in ways that will make Latino students and their families feel more welcome.

Of the former, the university is using its Jesuit ties to build relationships with the Cristo Rey Network of 32 Catholic high schools in urban areas around the United States, all serving low-income students, and many of which have large minority populations.

But many Latino young people will never enroll at a private high school, and may be unlikely to enroll at any four-year institution right out of high school, Baworowsky said. So that means building up relationships with community colleges.

Next year, the university will add a Chicago recruiter to the one already there. The new position will focus on City Colleges of Chicago, which has large black and Latino populations. "We're only going to really achieve our goals with a transfer population" in addition to a traditional-age population, Baworowsky said. (While Marquette is focused on Latino students, it is also seeing gains among black students. Of this year's 2,056 deposits, 120 are from black students, up from 105 in last year's class.)

> All of the research on Latino students shows that college is a family decision.

At the university, Baworowsky is staffing in ways that will attract more Latino students. That has meant adding Spanish-speaking counselors in both admissions and financial aid. That's important, he said, because "all of the research on Latino students shows that college is a family decision," not just that of the student enrolling. Parents need to be part of the process and feel welcome, he said.

Likewise, he said, a key measure of success is recruiting students who will do well academically. This year, the ACT composite average for all students was 27, about one-tenth of a point up from last year. The Latino average was 24.7, but that was also up one-tenth of a point from the prior year. (Those figures put Marquette ahead of national averages for all groups, and with a smaller gap between Latino and all students than is the case nationally.)

To achieve all of these goals does mean spending more. Baworowsky said that the discount rate, which he declined to disclose, is up about one-tenth of a point this year. He said he is "never comfortable" with the discount rate, but that it is "manageable." He also said it is a reality that recruiting more minority students means recruiting more students with substantial financial need. That's OK with him, "when we are attracting more and attracting students with better academics," he said. ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/article/2017/05/08/how-marquette-becoming-more-diverse

The Bermuda Triangle of Credit Transfer

BY DOUG LEDERMAN // SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

Three reports highlight different ways that changing colleges is difficult. Bottom line (in one expert's words): transferring students are "abused."

More than a third of all college students move from one college to another at least once in their academic careers, and more institutions -- public and private alike -- count on transfer students to fill their classes. Which makes it all the more perplexing, and problematic for colleges and students alike, that the path students must follow to move from one institution to another is riddled with potholes and roadblocks that stop many of them in their tracks.

A trio of new reports from different sources illustrate just how vexing the transfer process is. A Government Accountability Office study released Wednesday provides baseline data both about the number of students who change colleges (one in three) and about the cost to those students and to taxpayers when those students lose roughly four in 10 of the credits they accumulated at their first institution.

The National Student Clearinghouse's "Tracking Transfer" report broadens the lens to show that while community college students who transfer to a four-year institution are far likelier than all two-year-college students to earn a bachelor's degree (42 percent to 13 percent), those from low-income backgrounds who transfer to non-selective or rural four-year institutions are at a severe disadvantage.

And a report from the Campaign for College Opportunity calls the much-traversed transfer route in California a "complex and costly maze" that forces those who navigate it successfully to spend tens of thousands of dollars more to earn a bachelor's degree than do students who start out at one of the state's (more expensive) four-year universities.

"The confluence of these studies confirms that this is a problem, and that transfer students are one

of most abused [groups of] students," said Davis Jenkins, a senior research scholar at the Community College Research Center at Columbia University's Teachers College. "They haven't been well served by most institutions, two-year and four-year alike."

The Transfer Landscape

Students change colleges for lots of reasons: shifts in their educational needs or goal, dissatisfaction with the original institution, changes in life situations, and the like. And for perhaps the largest chunk

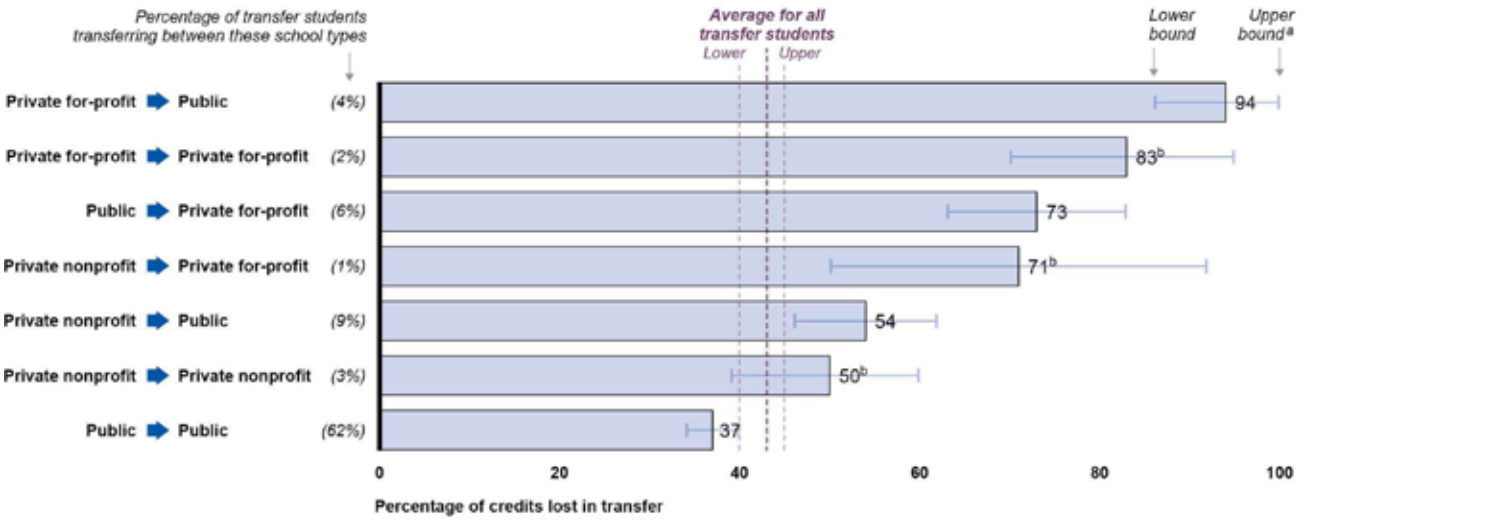
of transferring students -- those who enroll at community colleges with the goal of eventually attaining a four-year degree -- changing institutions is a central, purposeful objective.

As the GAO study shows, a significant number of students -- 35 percent of all students who started college in the 2003-04 academic year, according to the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study -- make such a change. The vast majority of those, roughly 75 percent, started at a public institution, and about two-thirds transferred from one public to another.

On the whole, public institutions within a state are thought to have the best records on transfer of credit, since they are presumably more likely to work in concert with one another, to have common goals or to have either voluntary cooperative agreements or statewide policies requiring cooperation. And in fact, the GAO estimates, students transferring between two public institutions do on average lose fewer academic credits in the process than do those crossing sector lines, as seen in the graphic below.

But the average transfer student

Figure 2: Estimated Percentage of Credits Lost in Transfer, on Average, by School Type, Academic Years 2003-04 to 2008-09



Source: GAO analysis of 2004-2009 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. | GAO-17-574

lost a full 43 percent of their credits, roughly 13 credits, or a semester's worth, the GAO estimates. The reasons why credits do not transfer vary: mismatches in the curricula of the different institutions, too many of the courses do not apply to a major, snobbery on the part of the receiving institutions, poor choices by students (sometimes based on inferior advising).

The costs are significant, and not just to the students who may have to repeat course work. Given that half of the students who transferred in the sample the GAO studied had received Pell Grants, and nearly two-thirds received federal loans, "credits lost in a transfer also can result in additional costs for the federal government in providing student aid," GAO wrote. "The government's costs may increase if transfer students who receive financial aid take longer to complete a degree as a result of retaking lost credits."

The California study offers a look at how the issues play out in one state (but a mammoth one). It reaches a similar finding -- that 38 percent of community college students transfer within six years -- and estimates that those who transfer spend an estimated $36,000 to $38,000 more to get their bachelor's degrees than do students who start out at a California public institution.

It spreads the blame for the problem widely, citing:

- "A broken remedial education system that traps students in non-credit-bearing courses."

- Campus-level faculty autonomy that allows a "lack of curricular alignment with other campuses," often within the same system.
- A "decentralized higher education system" in which the state's three major systems "operate as distinctive entities with no mandate for cooperation."
- "Too many choices in general education with inaccessible information for students to make informed decisions."
- State budget cuts that have restricted the availability of courses at community colleges, causing delays in the time to transfer.
- A ratio of 615 students for every community college adviser or counselor, resulting in "students guiding themselves or receiving inconsistent guidance."

"Students are caught in the middle of battles between the systems, colleges and faculty, and the costs are high," said Michele Siqueiros, president of the Campaign for College Opportunity. "Every day spent fighting over educational turfs, we fail to clear up the transfer maze and we lose the talented students we urgently need for our work force and economic stability."

The third report, from the National Student Clearinghouse, provides not just data about the national picture for transfer students but a framework by which individual states and institutions (two-year and four-year) can judge their own success -- and be judged.

The clearinghouse study, which follows a 2016 study that laid out the framework, provides data on how successfully students transfer out of community colleges and into four-year institutions.

For instance, it finds that while 33.6 percent of all transfer students leave community colleges having earned a certificate or associate degree, those numbers are slightly higher at two-year colleges that are primarily occupational (35.8 percent) than primarily academic (32 percent). And while 42.2 percent of all students who transferred from a community college ultimately earned a bachelor's degree, only 35.8 percent of those from the lower socioeconomic quintiles did so, compared to 44.7 percent of those from the upper two quintiles. (Students who were enrolled full-time in a community college, unsurprisingly, earned bachelor's degrees at a rate of 61.4 percent, compared to 8.3 percent of those who studied exclusively part-time.)

The clearinghouse report assessed four-year institutions on similar grounds; 54.5 percent of students who transferred to very selective institutions completed bachelor's degrees, compared to 21.1 percent of those at nonselective colleges, and transfers to suburban institutions were likelier to graduate (38.3 percent) than those at urban (35.4 percent) or rural institutions (29.3 percent).

The days when only a small number of institutions might have worried about transfer students are gone, said Jenkins, of the Community College Research Center. "When we talk to students who've tried to transfer, it makes me want to cry, and when we talk to legislators, people are pissed off," he said.

And with many if not most regional public universities and private nonprofit colleges struggling with enrollments, "colleges are missing a huge business opportunity to invest" in making sure they are clearing pathways for transfer students, he said.

"They're failing to recognize who their students are," Jenkins said. "A lot more of them are getting most of their students through transfer, and they have to do a better job" of working with community colleges to smooth out impediments. "They should work with their suppliers like any other business that's supplier dependent." ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/14/reports-highlight-woes-faced-one-third-all-college-students-who-transfer

Cal State to End Placement Exams

BY ASHLEY A. SMITH // JUNE 13, 2017

Move is part of a goal to significantly raise graduation rates.

Many community colleges are moving away from placement exams as a means of determining the skills of incoming students.

Now the California State University System is planning to do the same in an effort to increase graduation rates, despite lingering concerns from some officials and faculty members that removing the tests may hurt students in the long run.

"We're trying to increase the number of students who can go right into college course work to get college credit instead of track students into remediation for various reasons," said April Grommo, director of enrollment management services for the system, adding that the system would discontinue the use of early placement tests as soon as 2018 and instead rely on high school grades and course work, SAT or ACT scores as measures to determine college readiness.

The move is part of the system's long-term goal known as Graduation Initiative 2025, which is a series of steps Cal State is taking to increase the four-year graduation rate from about 20 percent today to 40 percent in the next eight years. The goal also includes increasing the six-year graduation rate from 57 percent in 2015 to 70 percent in 2025.

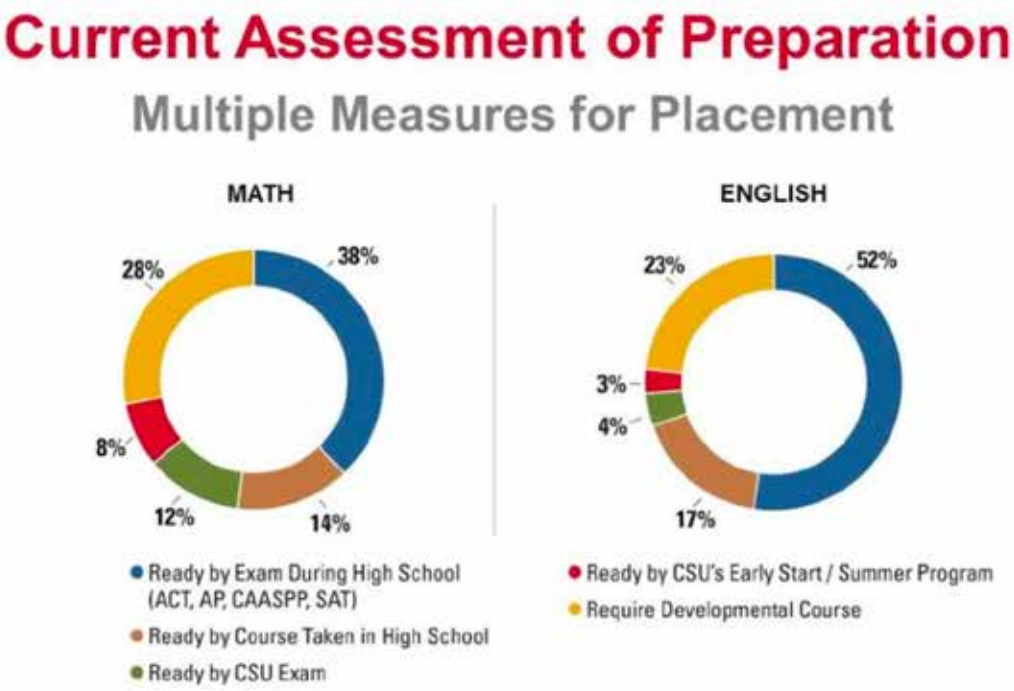
The Cal State system currently uses its own English and math exams designed by Educational Testing Service to determine placement.

The system already uses the SAT, the ACT and the state assessment given to K-12 students as a method to exempt students from taking placement exams altogether. But under the new policy, in order for students to be considered "conditionally ready" for English, they would have to meet a similar standard on the state's Early Assessment Program exam, which is given to 11th-grade students, score between a 510 and 540 on the

SAT's reading and writing section, or score between 19 and 21 on the ACT English section. Students considered to be "conditionally ready" in math would also have to meet a similar standard on the EAP exam, score between 520 and 560 on the SAT math section, or score between 20 and 22 on the ACT math test.

Students could transition from conditionally ready to "ready" in math or English if they completed approved 12th-grade courses or transferred college courses that satisfy the requirement with a grade of C or better.

But if students score below those benchmarks and were considered conditionally ready, the system would introduce the review of high



school course work and grades to determine placement, Grommo said, and if based on all factors the students are found not to be college ready, they would be required to attend the system's early-start course in the summer.

Grommo said the system is still gathering feedback from campuses, community college partners and K-12 systems across the state, so the new policy isn't finalized yet.

"We are introducing the evaluation of high school course work and discontinuing the placement test since we already have passing scores for ACT, SAT and EAP in place," she said. "By introducing high school course work as an additional placement method, less students will need remediation and can start in college credit-bearing courses with additional support."

Systemwide 28 percent of students are placed in remedial math and 23 percent in remedial English, Grommo said. The system serves about 480,000 students.

In math, 38 percent of students are considered ready for college-level course work -- 52 percent in English -- by the time they graduate from high school, but after they've taken the state exam, the ACT, SAT or AP exam. When it comes to the current placement exams, 12 percent of students are considered ready in math and 4 percent in English are ready for college-level courses.

Removing placement exams isn't the only angle in the initiative to increase graduation rates. The chancellor's office is also directing campuses to create "stretch" courses and supplemental courses. Stretch courses, unlike traditional remediation, would give college credit to students who might not be likely to succeed in college-level courses and provide them with more time with instructors and additional support. Some campuses, like Cal State Long Beach, already offer stretch courses. The system is also expecting campuses to beef up early-start programs to provide additional support to incoming students in the summer.

Researchers have been learning for years now that some students who are placed in remedial courses because of placement tests would actually be better served in college-level courses. Students often don't receive college credit for remedial or developmental education courses. Those classes may also increase barriers to completion by using up students' financial aid resources.

"We know success of remedial

courses, especially at community colleges, is less than stellar, and students trapped in remedial aren't able to move forward and earn college credits," said Michele Siqueiros, president of the Campaign for College Opportunity, a California-based nonprofit that seeks to build support for public higher education. "The movement toward multiple measures is a better one, and having one high-stakes test … is inefficient. Students' abilities can't be appropriately measured by one aspect, and testing them on multiple measures should be the approach."

A 2012 study from the Community College Research Center at Teachers College at Columbia University found that up to a third of students who tested into remedial courses because of college placement tests could have passed college-level classes with a grade of B or better.

> "We're trying to increase the number of students who can go right into college course work to get college credit instead of track students into remediation for various reasons."

However, there has been less focus and research on eliminating placement exams at four-year universities.

"Although there's no reason to assume the results will be different at universities," said Pam Burdman, a higher education policy analyst and fellow at the Opportunity Institute, a nonprofit that promotes social mobility based in Berkeley, Calif., "my hope, since they're going ahead with this, is that CSU will monitor and evaluate the outcome of this policy and how it impacts students. But a lot of research has shown, particularly in math, remedial course taking doesn't benefit students in terms of their future college outcomes."

Burdman said there shouldn't be a concern for students attending a STEM-focused campus like California Polytechnic State University, with majors in highly technical disciplines, since the requirements in math would already be stronger.

But admission standards are so selective on those campuses that students wouldn't be affected by the CSU policy change on placement tests, Matt Lazier, media relations director at Cal Poly, said in an email, adding that none of the university's new students are remedial. The grade point average for the incoming freshman class is 4.04, the ACT average is 31 and SAT average is 2085.

Meanwhile, at Cal State Long Beach, President Jane Conoley said the campus already has stretch courses, but she sees this as an opportunity to redirect remedial resources into learning communities, supplemental education and cohort-based training that research has already proven helps students who are the least prepared for college-level courses.

"Whether grades or a placement exam, nothing is perfect, but we've been going down this path for a while to get rid of these dead-end courses students don't do well in, they have to repeat and don't get credit for," Conoley said, adding that 30 percent of Long Beach students require remediation. "There is a concern faculty may have that they may get students not as prepared, but my dream is all the resources invested in remedial would be moved to stretch courses and to support faculty members."

And although most of the movement on eliminating placement tests has been at the community college level, Conoley said regardless of whether they are in high school, community college or a university, students presented with a challenge will rise to meet it and "lowering expectations slows them down for graduation."

For many faculty members, grading placement exams isn't a thrilling venture, but there needs to be some type of assessment that communicates students can enter an undergraduate class, especially when the reality is that many students do need some type of remediation, said Steven Filling, a professor of accounting and finance at CSU Stanislaus and chapter president for the California Faculty Association.

"CSU is mandated to take the top one-third of graduating [high

school] students," Filling said. "Our population is pretty broad, but it's still the top third. We're interested in our students being able to successfully process what is going on in the university system, but placement exams are there in the first place because high school grades don't give you all the information you need. There's a lot of variability out there."

> The movement toward multiple measures is a better one, and having one high-stakes test … is inefficient. Students' abilities can't be appropriately measured by one aspect.

The Stanislaus campus already has stretch courses, as well.

"Politically it would be wonderful to say we're getting rid of any kind of placement exam or developmental remedial education and everyone thinks it's progress," Filling said. "But we're not sure that's progress, because we haven't solved the problem of people not being engaged in quantitative reasoning as they approach problems in their lives."

Ultimately, Filling said, he hopes CSU administration understands the complete implications of what these changes may mean to students and wishes they had talked to more faculty about how these changes may affect students.

The Cal State English Council, for example, issued a statement expressing dismay at the speed with which the shift to end placement exams has happened.

"While many first-year writing programs are in favor of retiring the [early placement test], this is not a universal opinion, which speaks to the need for campus autonomy in determining assessment measures for placement," the statement said.

Some campuses have transitioned to directed self-placement, which has eliminated the need for the placement exam, but the council feels each campus should be able to decide its own assessment measures for placement.

"Yes, I want to see the graduation rate go up, and I'll do anything within bounds to make that happen, but to me graduation is a metric for something else," Filling said. "We can't just focus on how many diplomas we hand out and forget that's not what we do. We're trying to educate people." ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/13/california-state-university-looks-end-placement-exams

Credits Up With '15 to Finish'

BY ASHLEY A. SMITH // MAY 23, 2017

In Indiana, encouraging students to pursue a full credit load is having a positive impact on students when the financial incentive is significant, according to a new analysis.

A new analysis examining the effects of Indiana's 15 to Finish initiative finds the greater the financial incentive, the more likely students will take on a full-time course load -- and with little to no negative impact.

The report examines the effects of the Indiana Legislature's 2013 decision to increase the number of courses students needed to complete each year in order to be eligible to renew their state financial aid award. Students are now required to take at least 30 credits a year -- or 15 a semester -- to maintain aid. The move was made in an effort to cut down on students' time to graduation. Some experts say students assume taking 12 credits per semester is enough for them to earn a degree in two years for an associate degree or four years for a bachelor's degree.

The analysis from Postsecondary Analytics -- a research consulting firm -- found that the change in financial aid policy led to a 5.2 percent average growth rate in the likelihood of students earning 30 credits or more in a year. For students who received Indiana's highest financial aid award, the average growth rate in the likelihood of earning 30 or more credits in a year increased 10.1 percent.

Despite concerns, the analysis also found that the policy change did not lead to a significant decline in completion rates, fall-to-spring retention rates, or in fall grade point average. There was a small decline, however, in 18- and 19-year-old recipients of Indiana's smallest financial award.

"The financial aid policy is effective for increasing credit-hour completion," said Takeshi Yanagiura, a doctoral student in economics and education at Teachers College, Columbia University, who co-authored the report. "We find little evidence on potential negative side effects due to the policy."

Besides GPA remaining the same, the analysis found that there was no difference between whether students were at a two-year or four-year institution, and students also did not switch their majors.

"These results confirm our own internal studies we've done following what happens with financial aid students since the legislation passed in 2013," said Teresa Lubbers, Indiana's commissioner of higher education. "Our financial aid complements our other attitude about how we finance education in Indiana. We have a philosophy of paying for what we value."

Lubbers said institutions receive

performance funding by getting more students to complete on time, so creating the incentive for students to increase the rate they finish means that the colleges they attend will receive more aid, as well.

More institutions and states are looking at decreasing the time students take to a degree as a way to boost overall completion numbers. A growing body of research has pointed out that full-time students are more likely to graduate -- although there are concerns about the unintended consequences that can come from policies that mandate or encourage full-time credit loads, for example on returning students or those with full-time jobs or family responsibilities.

Complete College America, which is based in Indiana, has advocated for 15 to Finish reforms across the country.

"CCA has long believed that time is the enemy of college completion," said Sarah Ancel, vice president of strategy at CCA, who was also an associate commissioner at the state's higher education department when the policy went into effect. "One thing that is really notable is the positive impact the policy has for underrepresented minorities. It's a victory for completion, but also equity."

The analysis found credit hours increased by 11.7 percent for ethnic minority students compared to 9.4 percent for nonminority students.

The analysis looked at two different financial aid awards offered in Indiana -- the state's 21st Century Scholars program and the Frank O'Bannon Grants -- which make up the majority of the state's aid programs. The 21st Century program is for low-income students who meet certain GPA and academic benchmarks. In 2014, the program awarded on average $7,900 to first-time students at four-year institutions and $3,630 to first-time students at two-year institutions. With the state's financial aid policy change, students had to maintain 30 or more credits a year to continue to receive the annual scholarship.

> A lot is at stake for our 21st Century Scholars -- if they don't complete the credit hours, they lose the scholarship and they would fall into another financial aid pool.

The O'Bannon Grant is also need-based, however, the highest award amount for private university students is $7,400. For four-year students, it's $3,700, and for two-year students, it's $3,100. Under Indiana's 15 to Finish policy, students also have to maintain 30 credits a year to receive the maximum award amount, but students who complete 24 credits or fewer could lose up to $300 if they received the maximum award.

"A lot is at stake for our 21st Century Scholars -- if they don't complete the credit hours, they lose the scholarship and they would fall into another financial aid pool," Lubbers said. "The students who have the most to lose felt the greatest sense of urgency to pick up extra credit hours."

Despite the positive results, Yanagiura cautions that they are based on short-term outcomes and there is more about the policy that needs to be studied.

"The policy is still only a few years old, and long-term outcomes are not available yet and beyond the scope of this study," he said, adding that those long-term outcomes include graduation, wage and student debt. ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/05/23/analysis-indiana%E2%80%99s-15-finish-finds-positive-effects

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Full-Time Finishers

BY PAUL FAIN // APRIL 19, 2017

A growing body of research shows that full-time college students are more likely to graduate, yet experts caution against policies that neglect part-time students.

A growing body of research shows that college students who enroll full-time, taking even 12 credits' worth of course work in a single semester, are much more likely stick with college, save money and eventually graduate.

Yet while the researchers behind these studies encourage efforts to nudge more students to go full-time (ideally taking 30 credits in a year), they warn against neglecting the many who will continue to attend part-time because of work and family demands -- currently only 38 percent of community college students are enrolled full-time, according to the American Association of Community Colleges.

In addition, they said colleges and policy makers should avoid full-time enrollment incentives that veer toward the punitive. Some critics have made that charge about the 30-credit provision in New York State's new free-college plan, which means students will be on the hook to pay back the tuition costs of their second semester if they fall even a credit short in a year.

The latest evidence of the benefits of full-time enrollment status comes in a newly released report from the Center for Community College Student Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin.

By looking at transcript data of 17,085 students from 28 community colleges, the center found that 34 percent of students who went full-time for at least some time earned an associate degree or a certificate, compared to only 23 percent who enrolled part-time throughout their community college experience.

Full-time enrollment in the first term also led to a substantial graduation rate bump, according to the study, which tracked students from 2005 to 2013.

Students who took at least 12 credits when they first arrived at college were more likely to return for a second year (77 percent compared to 64 percent) and to earn a credential (38 percent compared to 31 percent).

"Because there is an obvious benefit in students having some full-time experience, a full-time edge, you might say, colleges should consider asking each student one straightforward question: Is there any way you could attend full-time, even for one semester?" Evelyn Waiwaiole, the center's executive director, said in a written statement.

The new report builds on previous research from the Center for Community College Research at Columbia University's Teachers College.

Last year CCRC released a study looking at the comparative benefits of students who took even larger course loads -- at least 15 credits -- during their first semester of enrollment at public institutions in Tennessee, both at two-year colleges and four-year institutions.

Community college students who took at least 15 credits were 6.4 percentage points more likely to earn a credential than those who took 12, the study found. That gap was 11 percentage points among students at four-year institutions.

The findings from the two studies in some ways fly in the face of conventional wisdom, which holds that less prepared and first-generation students, including those from minority groups or low-income backgrounds, should ease their way into college with relatively light course loads.

"That turns out to be very bad advice," said Davis Jenkins, a senior research associate at CCRC and co-author of the Tennessee study. "It's the soft bigotry of low expectations. … We're not being straight with students."

Don't Forget Part-Timers

In general, full-time students are much more likely to graduate than their part-time peers, as community colleges have long known. Yet the substantial benefits of any experience as a full-time student might surprise some.

The Center for Community College Student Engagement report describes several reasons why this might be happening.

One is that students who initially take a full load are more likely to be required to go through a new-student orientation. And full-time students spend more time on campus and have better access to support services, including academic advisers. Just as important, they have more opportunities to collaborate with other students and to be exposed to full-time faculty members.

> We need to help our colleges find ways to better design their services to help part-time students.

For example, 30 percent of students who attended part-time throughout community college reported that they never talked about career plans with an instructor or adviser, according to a center survey, compared to 19 percent of always full-time students and 22 percent of students with fluid attendance patterns.

"They get early engagement. They're not just getting engagement in that last semester," Waiwaiole said in an interview. She adds that full-time students are "just more knowledgeable about the experience of how to get through college."

Both Waiwaiole and Jenkins said they hope research on the benefits of full-time attendance will help colleges to adjust how they operate. That means tweaking schedules to make it possible for working students to take more courses. And for students who do go all in with a full-time load, they said colleges need to do more up front to help them set a plan to get to graduation.

"We really have to change educators' mind-sets," said Jenkins.

Complete College America is a nonprofit organization that is pushing hard on full-time enrollment with a campaign dubbed 15 to Finish. The group's president, Tom Sugar, applauded the new report from CCCSE, pointing to "tragic" graduation rates for part-time students.

"Fifteen credits work better for students across the board," said Sugar.

The group, which receives funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, points to several states and institutions that are seeking to make a 15-credit load more appeal-

ing to students. Minnesota and Indiana make additional state-based grant aid available for students who go full-time, Sugar said. And the Indiana University System charges the same tuition rate for 15 credits as it does 12 credits -- so-called "banded" tuition rates.

Even so, part-time students will remain a large group in American higher education, at least for the foreseeable future.

Only half of the four-year college students in CCRC's Tennessee study sample attempted to take 27 or more credits in their first year. And just 28 percent of the state's two-year college students took at least 15 credits in their first semester, the study found, with that number dropping to 20 percent for a full year.

"We need to help our colleges find ways to better design their services to help part-time students," said Karen Stout, president and CEO of Achieving the Dream, a nonprofit group that works on college completion in the two-year sector.

While Jenkins said he supports efforts to encourage more students to take 30 credits in a year, it's important to recognize that this is far from an easy lift.

"Students who have limited means, it can be difficult for them," he said, particularly as many work for 30 or more hours a week.

In addition, Jenkins said research shows that the retention and completion benefits of taking a full load is about attempting the courses, not necessarily passing all of them. Community college students tend to fail 15 to 20 percent of their courses, he said.

New York left little margin for error in its free-college plan's 30-credit requirement, likely by design. And participating students who fail courses might be surprised to receive a tuition bill.

"There's good intention with this. And it builds on the momentum about access," Stout said of New York's legislation. But she adds that "it's going to shut a lot of people out."

Stout said tough questions remain about who can go to college full-time, and called for a nuanced approach to policies that seek to move more students in that direction.

"Is privilege behind the full-time edge?" she said. ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/04/19/students-who-attend-college-full-time-even-one-semester-are-more-likely-graduate

Degree Plus?

BY JEREMY BAUER-WOLF // MAY 31, 2017

University of Utah's new certificate program raises a question: Do students with liberal arts degrees need more to get a job?

Not every student walking away with a liberal arts degree from the University of Utah -- or any other institution, for that matter -- feels confident picking a profession or finding a job in an often tepid market.

So the university has introduced an option growing in popularity -- a certificate program, what it has labeled as "degree-plus." Though certificates often are geared toward older adults returning to academe and seeking to diversify their skill sets, the University of Utah has concentrated on recent liberal arts graduates, largely in the humanities and social sciences.

The pitch: through just seven or eight weeks of what university officials call inexpensive classes, those with a liberal arts background can learn technical skills that will make them more attractive to prospective employers, and possibly introduce them to a new field.

"Use your psychology degree to move into a career in recruiting and talent acquisition," a website advertising the program reads. "Take your history degree into the creative fields of web design or digital marketing. Or discover that the interests that led you to a degree in English may also be a great match for a career in operations or project management."

The research that campus leaders are basing the program on, conducted by Burning Glass Technologies, indicates a skills gap between liberal arts students and those with more in-demand backgrounds -- namely in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics realm, said Andrea Miller, the associate director for professional education at the university.

But the university won't use the term "skills gap," Miller said. The certificate simply provides another possibility for graduates, and it's certainly not necessary for a liberal arts major to succeed, she said.

In 2013, Burning Glass, a software analytics company focused on studying labor, found that the salaries of liberal arts graduates with some additional technical skills averaged about $7,000 higher than their peers with just a degree. Nearly double the number of jobs are available to graduates with some form of technical skills, according to a Burning Glass report.

"Adding skills is not a bad idea," Miller said. "In this lifelong learning reality of higher education, your undergraduate degree cannot be the last thing you learn in today's economy."

A survey of 3,000 undergraduates (the university received about 600 responses) validated the concept, Miller said. Students responded positively to the idea.

The certificate -- which does not earn students credits -- will be added to transcripts, and they will be provided code for a digital "badge" that can be placed on online résumés and social media.

Though some liberal arts students secured internships with ease and had an advantage finding a job, others found the broadness of what they could do with a liberal arts degree "daunting," Miller said.

The university narrowed down five programs it wanted to offer in the first phase of the rollout in fall 2017, with certificates ranging from data and work force analysis to instructional design.

Most of the students in the program will have just completed a four- or five-year undergraduate degree and wouldn't want to dive into something complex, Miller said. The university wouldn't want to burden students with additional debt, either, acknowledging the ubiquity and weight of student loans, she said.

> The whole trend around work, around microcredentialing and understanding how we can deliver a program beyond just a degree, is an important one.

Each certificate, which can be completed in roughly 60 hours of instruction, costs $1,499, with other nominal fees in a couple of the programs, Miller said.

Classes are held a couple times a week, she said. Instruction, by choice, is not online, Miller said.

A credential can be completed in a shorter time frame than a full degree, though quality should always be questioned, said Jim Woodell, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' vice president for economic development and community engagement.

Students sought networking opportunities and the ability to talk with someone working in the industry, which includes most of the instructors, Miller said. The university brought in a mix of existing adjunct professors and other professionals to teach classes.

Each course ends with a capstone project so students can prove to employers what skills they've learned, Miller said.

The way colleges and universities decide to weave in such technical skills will differ depending on the program, but institutions need to make an effort to include work-related opportunities outside the classroom, Woodell said. Building technical skills into curricula could be dangerous because in five years, they could be outdated, he said.

"The whole trend around work, around microcredentialing and understanding how we can deliver a program beyond just a degree, is an important one," Woodell said.

Matt Hilburn, vice president of research and marketing for EDCUtah, a nonprofit that tries to attract businesses to the state, in an interview talked up liberal arts students' communication skills.

Hilburn will oversee the data analysis certificate at the university. Data skills on a résumé can pique the interest of someone hiring for a traditionally liberal arts position, he said.

Becoming a master statistician would still require a master's degree, Hilburn said.

"As a data guy, I do think that data is important. But we underserve and we almost demean the liberal arts," he said. "I don't think this is required for liberal arts students."

Almost every institution has established a career center to assist students with picking a career path or steering them toward academic opportunities that would enhance their viability. Such a model is far from outdated, Miller said, but luring in the typical undergraduate student, a busy teenager or young adult, can prove difficult.

"It is the question of the century, how to get their attention," she said. "We have to throw out as many solutions out there as possible."

A study by Gallup and Purdue University found that 17 percent of students surveyed nationwide found their career center to be "very helpful" -- about 63 percent found it either "helpful" or "somewhat helpful."

Most students indicated -- about 60 percent -- they had at least visited the career center once.

Brent Drake, Purdue's chief data officer, who works on the Gallup-Purdue Index, said he does not believe a liberal arts education has lost its value. He said personally the liberal arts have taught him all the skills he's needed to be a "lifelong learner."

The worth of stackable credentials will vary by student, he said.

"I think it really depends on what the student's career aspirations and desires are," Drake said. "If they're focusing on a more specific area or trying to pick up extra job skills, it makes sense."

Penny Rue, Wake Forest University's vice president for campus life and the chairwoman-elect of NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, said she believes programs like the one at Utah will be become more popular and emulated.

Because these are certificates, not full degrees, they're not necessarily governed by the same accreditation standards can be delivered more nimbly, Rue said.

Students also want speedy solutions after graduation, she said. Rue pointed out that Wake Forest's most popular postgrad program is a one-year master's in management.

"I definitely think we'll see more of this," Rue said. ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/05/31/university-utah-program-pushes-technical-skills-liberal-arts-majors

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'Robot-Proof'

BY SCOTT JASCHIK // SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

Northeastern president discusses his new book on how higher education can train students for careers where technology cannot make them redundant.

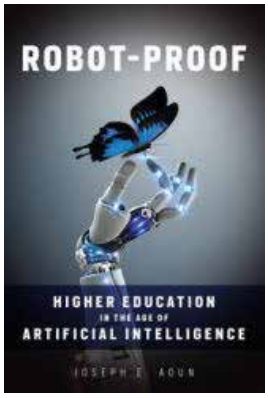
In the era of artificial intelligence, robots and more, higher education is arguably more important than ever. Academic researchers are producing the ideas that lead to technology after technology. On the other hand, a challenge exists for higher education: how to produce graduates whose careers won't be derailed by all of these advances. Now that robots can pick stocks, this isn't just about factory jobs, but the positions that college graduates have long assumed were theirs.

Northeastern University is involved in both sides of that equation. Its academic programs in engineering, computer science and other fields are producing these breakthroughs. And its students -- at an institution known for close ties to employers -- of course want good careers. Joseph E. Aoun, Northeastern's president, explores these issues in Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (MIT Press). Aoun is a scholar in linguistics when he's not focused on university administration. His book argues that changes in the college curriculum are needed to prepare students in this new era, but that doesn't mean ignoring the humanities or general education.

Aoun, one of seven presidents honored today by the Carnegie Corporation for academic leadership, responded via email to questions about his new book.

Q: How worried should college graduates be about being replaced by technology? Is it likely that many jobs today held by those with college degrees will be replaced by robots or some form of technology?

A: Smart machines are getting smarter, and many of the jobs performed by people today are going to disappear. Some studies predict that half of all U.S. jobs are at risk within the next 20 years. And it's not just blue-collar jobs; today intelligent machines are picking stocks, doing legal research and even



writing news articles. Simply put, if a job can be automated in the future, it will be.

For higher education to meet this challenge -- for us to make people robot-proof -- we need to change. In my book, I offer a blueprint for how we can accomplish this. We will need to re-envision the curriculum, invest in experiential education and put lifelong learning at the heart of what we do. It will not be easy, but we have a responsibility -- to the students of today and tomorrow -- to change the way we do business.

Q: In an era of adaptive learning and online learning, should faculty members be worried about their jobs in the future?

A: We're seeing educational content become commoditized. Therefore, the job of faculty members has to go beyond simply transmitting knowledge. More than ever, the priority for faculty is to create new knowledge and act as the catalysts to make their students robot-proof. The personal connection between student and teacher cannot be replaced by a machine.

But, like students, faculty members must act to meet the challenge of today's world and should embrace the transformation of higher education that I describe in my book.

Q: What is "humanics," and what are the three kinds of literacy that you want colleges to teach?

A: Humanics is the curriculum for a robot-proof education. It is based on the purposeful integration of technical literacies, such as coding and data analytics, with uniquely human literacies, such as creativity, entrepreneurship, ethics, cultural agility and the ability to work with others.

The key is integration. We need to break down the academic silos that separate historians from engineers.

When I talk to employers, they tell me that they would give their right arm for more systems thinkers -- quarterbacks who can see across disciplines and analyze them in an integrated way. And every student should be culturally agile, able to communicate across boundaries, and to think ethically. By integrating technology, data and humanities, we can help students become robot-proof.

Q: In your vision for the future of higher education, is this about embedding these skills into existing programs or starting from scratch?

A: Higher education has the elements for a robot-proof model, but we need to be much more intentional about how we integrate them. As I've mentioned, our curriculum needs to change so that technical and human literacies are unified.

We need to deliver this curriculum in an experiential way. This means recognizing that learning happens beyond the classroom through co-ops and meaningful internships. I truly believe that experiential education is the most powerful way to learn.

Still, no one is going to be set for life. We need to commit to lifelong learning in a way that we haven't done in the past. Universities have been engaged in lifelong learning for many years, but it is usually treated as a second-class operation. We need to bring lifelong learning to the core of our mission.

This will require us to rethink the way we deliver education, particularly to working professionals who don't have time to be on campus every day. Online and hybrid delivery modes will be essential. We have to meet learners wherever they are -- in their careers and around the world.

Credentials will need to be unbundled so that learners don't have to commit to long-term degree programs. Stackable certificates, badges and boot camps will become the norm.

These changes won't happen by themselves. Institutions should establish authentic partnerships with employers, redesign courses to fill gaps that employers actually need and connect them with students through co-ops and internships.

Q: How is Northeastern getting ready for these changes?

A: Northeastern has designed its academic plan to meet the challenges -- and opportunities -- presented by smart machines. Beyond the curricular changes required by humanics, and our leadership in experiential learning, we are building a multicampus network spanning different cities, regions and countries. Learners will be able to gain access to this network wherever they are and whenever it's convenient for them.

Throughout its history, higher education has adapted to changes in the world. Knowing what we know about the revolution of smart machines, we have a responsibility to remain relevant and an opportunity to make our learners robot-proof. ■

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/09/12/author-discusses-new-book-about-making-college-graduates-robot-proof-era-artificial

Views

A selection of essays and op-eds

Why Chief Academic Officers Should Also Be Chief Enrollment Officers

BY MATTHEW POSLUSNY // SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

Matthew Poslusny writes that provosts should have responsibility for both recruiting and retaining students.

Historically, the role of the provost has been to focus on the academic vision of the institution. What programs should the college offer? How are we keeping the curriculum relevant? Are we preserving our academic rigor? Are faculty issues -- tenure, quality, shared governance -- handled in an institutionally appropriate fashion?

Today, that picture looks very different. According to Inside Higher Ed's 2017 survey of chief academic officers, respondents were divided evenly -- 38 percent agreed compared to 37 percent who disagreed -- when asked if their job is more focused on financial and management issues over academic issues. Despite this split, an overwhelming majority of 82 percent still responded that they were glad they pursued administrative work over staying in the classroom full-time.

This data suggest that there's flexibility in the way college presidents can structure the CAO position to achieve institutional success as well as professional satisfaction for the individual in the position. At Meredith College, the provost position was reconfigured to include enrollment management, and it has proven to be an effective model that other small colleges and universities should consider adopting. In doing so, the emphases become matters of quality and quantity and of recruiting and retaining students.

At times, academic and enrollment responsibilities can seem at odds. The challenge is consistently hitting enrollment goals while maintaining strict academic standards

for incoming students. A provost and VP of enrollment relationship can grow contentious if one struggles at the expense of the other.

This tension can be avoided by making one person responsible for both. Having one person with both perspectives allows one to understand the desire of admitting "only the best and brightest" while also weighing the budgetary constraints that become reality if the class does not make its goals.

Another enrollment area where it is important to see both sides is with retention. One reason students

transfer out after their first or second year is due to financial costs. Oftentimes the people in charge of financial aid and those responsible for retention are reporting to different vice presidents. One is charged with maximizing net tuition revenue and the other with retaining as many students as possible.

Having both report to one person and working together allows us to achieve optimum net tuition revenue with the highest possible retention rates. And the suspicion that the institution will keep even low-performing students as long as they are paying also loses its punch when the decision maker is charged with "quality control" as well.

This is not to say it's always been easy wearing both hats. The financial aid components of enrollment management come with a steep learning curve. With the various intricacies involved in the process and the ever-changing federal regulations, this aspect of enrollment management seemed the most foreign from an academic mind-set.

> Having both report to one person and working together allows us to achieve optimum net tuition revenue with the highest possible retention rates.

Although initial challenges existed, the new model, which Meredith adopted nearly four years ago, has paid tremendous dividends. One of the greatest benefits has been increased retention. Retention has improved by nearly 10 percent during that time. There has also been greater collaboration between academic departments and enrollment management offices, such as admissions, financial assistance and the registrar's office.

While the role of the president continues to evolve, demanding increased travel, fund-raising and serving as the external face of the institution, the role of the provost must also continue to evolve to oversee more than academics. And colleges and universities -- particularly those that are tuition driven -- can benefit greatly when those additional duties include oversight of enrollment. ■

Bio:
Matthew Poslusny is senior vice president and provost at Meredith College.

https://www.insidehighered.com/admissions/views/2017/09/18/provosts-should-take-responsibility-enrollment-management-essay

We Can No Longer Ignore the Slump

BY SARAH BARBER AND ROBERT THACKER // SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

Colleges and universities must build on first-year programs to help sophomore students define the questions that will guide their academic journeys, write Sarah Barber and Robert Thacker.

Everyone in higher education has heard of the sophomore slump. At most colleges and universities, first-year students are welcomed, encouraged and provided programs and services designed to help them navigate new academic expectations and build social networks. But they often come back the following fall with an unavoidable question: "So what do I do now?"

No longer new yet usually without a major (at least at liberal arts colleges) and still seeking a firm social place in the community, many sophomores lack focus and drift. They get into trouble, drop out, get sent home, transfer.

Higher education can no longer ignore the sophomore slump. The sophomore year is the toughest year in college -- it is where retention lives. We have to build on first-year programs to empower sophomore students to define the questions that will guide their academic journeys, to identify the opportunities and activities that will lead to their desired postcollegiate careers, and to develop relationships with faculty members, staff members and peers who will mentor them along the way. Individual institutions will have to determine their own approaches, remaining true to their mission and values. But retaining sophomores should be the overriding goal.

"Sophomore" derives from the Greek sophos, meaning "wise," and mōros, meaning "fool." Keeping that notion in mind as we envision and design programs for sophomores is probably a good start. Scholars who have focused on the sopho-

more year, such as Molly Schaller of St. Louis University and Julie Tetley at the U.S. Air Force Academy, have also advocated for a combination of academic and social programs directed solely toward sophomores. Those programs include dedicated housing, enhanced live-in academic advising, career and major-discovery programs, programs that single sophomores out and acknowledge their presence, and courses specifically designed to help second-year students answer vexing questions about their place and purpose on the campus and beyond.

> The cost of ignoring the sophomore slump is not just lost tuition dollars when we fail to retain our sophomores.

At St. Lawrence University, we have been working on those questions for about a decade. While we have a longstanding and robust yearlong program for first-year students, like most institutions, we have long known about and acknowledged some of the usual slippage during the sophomore year -- especially between the spring of the first year and the declaration of a major during the spring of the second year. During that time, students, especially young men, often avoid advisers, struggle with time management and overembrace new freedoms from parental and academic structures -- all of which results in them neglecting their academic work.

We have, however, taken steps of the sort suggested by Schaller and Tetley. Under the aegis of a 2007 grant from the Teagle Foundation, we worked with colleagues at Colorado, Connecticut and Skidmore Colleges to learn about the academic and social circumstances of sophomores at liberal arts colleges, and we then produced a white paper. Based on both quantitative and qualitative data gathered at each college, this paper recommended a variety of initiatives, still quite pertinent, that encourage sophomores to define and explore the goals that animate them within the liberal arts. We began by surveying our students about their interactions with their academic advisers, the challenges they felt, their campus involvements and their overall satisfaction. Those results led each college to initiate high-impact programs focused on sophomores.

While those program offerings varied at each institution, we all reconsidered our advising structures and set about designing complementary initiatives. At St. Lawrence, we created a menu of sophomore seminars and held discussion dinners. The seminars were shorter than usual courses, designed to feel different and focused on questions of personal values. (Two sample titles: "The Meaning of Life" and "What's Important to Me?") These seminars have continued and, through a 2016 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we are in the process of expanding them as a central element in a program we have called Sophomore Journeys.

Some of our new Sophomore Journeys seminars feature the same type of practical, hands-on, experiential learning that students so often praise in our successful first-year program. Students learn how to create podcasts and documentary videos or explore techniques for designing and assembling books. Other seminars have community-based learning components, like a book group with community members or a semester-long project with a partner social services organization. Still others will address pressing contemporary issues like the diversity of ways to practice Islam; the impact of the sport on national discussions of race, identity and policy; or how to evaluate the influence of Twitter on a presidency.

Every Sophomore Journeys seminar in our rotating menu of courses offers sophomores significant mentoring from faculty members outside the normal structure of office hours through teas and coffees, shared meals, and field trips. And every faculty member who teaches a sophomore seminar receives extra training on how to integrate into classroom discussions advice about selecting a major, obtaining

internships and pursuing research opportunities, as well as how to talk more comfortably with students about their extracurricular activities and residential and social environments.

Many institutions, not just liberal arts colleges, can adapt these strategies. Where targeted classes for sophomores may not be possible, departments and programs can reshape their foundational courses and expand elective offerings with an appeal to sophomores in mind. Where overtaxed advisers must restrict their focus for efficiency's sake to course selection or graduation requirements, colleges and universities can build peer-to-peer mentoring networks.

Attention to the sophomore year works: during the decade ending in 2016, St. Lawrence's first-year-to-sophomore-year retention has held steady at about 90 percent. But more than numbers, important as they are, colleges and universities have an implicit pedagogical and moral imperative as teachers of undergraduates. The cost of ignoring the sophomore slump is not just lost tuition dollars when we fail to retain our sophomores. It is less engaged, less motivated juniors; it is seniors uncertain about their futures after graduation. Institutional culture and reputation depend on how we help sophomores shape their own best answers to the question "So what do I do now?"

Enticing high school graduates to our institutions implies the responsibility of providing direction and support throughout each of a student's years on campus. On students' arrival and first adjustment, and during the years focused on the major, we all know well how to proceed. But now, and most especially, we need to keep focusing on the sophomore year as our "wise fools" seek to find their way -- helping them in discovering passions and direction, finding the modes that work, and leading them where they want to go. That's just what they should do now. ■

Bio:
Sarah Barber is an associate professor of English at St. Lawrence University. Robert Thacker is the Charles A. Dana Professor of Canadian Studies and English and was the first associate dean for academic advising programs at St. Lawrence University.

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A Call for Curricular Coherence

BY LONI BORDOLOI PAZICH // SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

Proliferating course offerings can overwhelm and confuse students and make a college education seem like a box-checking exercise rather than a cohesive and comprehensive intellectual endeavor, argues Loni Bordoloi Pazich.

Congratulations are in order for all the new college students now arriving on campuses. As they prepare for the transition to college and contemplate their academic futures, their focus will turn to choosing a major.

Students typically do not consider how degree requirements are organized, whether their general education or major courses are intellectually interrelated, how to choose wisely when presented with scores of course options and whether their courses will be scheduled so they can graduate on time. And why should they? The responsibility for coherence in the curriculum rests with faculty members, not students.

Proliferating course offerings can overwhelm and confuse students, simultaneously lead to both underenrolled courses and oversubscribed courses, encourage the hiring of adjuncts, and, in general, make a college education seem like a box-checking exercise rather than a cohesive and comprehensive intellectual endeavor. Yet faculty members often struggle to maintain coherence over the curriculum, to the detriment of student learning, and in extreme cases, to their institution's fiscal health. Why is addressing course proliferation so hard? What can be done about it?

As problematic as course proliferation is, it emerges due to a host of factors that might generally be viewed as positive: student demand for variety and a concomitant fear on the part of the faculty of impoverishing students' education through limits on choice; the explosion of knowledge in the disciplines, leading to majors that did not exist even a decade ago; and efforts to engage students in high-impact practices like undergraduate research, which necessitates changes -- generally, additions rather than transformations -- in the curriculum.

Overlooked structural and cultural issues at the heart of how faculty work is organized also contribute to the problem. Those factors came to light at a recent convening by the Teagle Foundation of grantees participating in our "Faculty Planning and Curricular Coherence" initiative.

Participants observed that faculty members are the masters of the curriculum but are neither incentivized nor penalized for attending to the coherence of their curriculum as a whole. Professors tend to think about their responsibility for their individual courses rather than how those courses contribute to students' learning holistically as they

move through their programs of study. Faculty rewards for teaching, even at institutions that place a premium on it, are typically tied to the student experience in a single course -- not how the course helps them build their skills and knowledge base as they progress toward their degrees.

Faculty-led curriculum committees that are charged with approving new courses and programs may be empowered to make unpopular decisions but still typically default to approving additions without mandating subtractions to the curriculum. That happens partly because of the tendency of faculty members to defer to one another as content experts, and partly because a new course or program may not be seen as being in direct competition with existing offerings -- particularly when it is delivered through a new faculty line rather than a reorganization of courses.

The problem of curricular incoherence is worsened by continuing trends in higher education. For instance, most contemporary graduate education programs leave new faculty members unprepared to teach outside their relatively narrow areas of research specialization. At some institutions, notions of faculty workload have become so highly individualistic that teaching and advising responsibilities are being discharged without meeting the needs of the department as a whole.

Without a shared vision for a unified and streamlined curriculum, planned collectively at the department level and then coordinated cross-departmentally, even modest efforts at promoting more integrative learning get bogged down in what ought to be easily resolvable issues like academic scheduling. Ultimately, as institutions contend with an intellectually disjointed curriculum that becomes increasingly expensive to deliver, administrators blame faculty members and their love of specialization, while faculty members blame administrators for imposing new course requirements or chasing new programs to attract students.

Overcoming Obstacles to Coherence

Discerning the barriers to curricular coherence makes them more navigable. And we can learn how to overcome those obstacles by example.

San Francisco State University's student exit surveys showed that the primary reason why undergraduates dropped out was because they were not getting into courses they needed to graduate -- an obstacle that is directly related to how faculty staff the courses they set as requirements for students. With support from a faculty learning community, schools and departments ranging from history to chemistry are reorganizing upper-division courses so they advance programwide learning objectives, are scheduled to meet students' needs for timely graduation and reduce reliance on adjuncts over the long run.

For example, faculty members at the School of Social Work have devised a new curricular road map that has removed several redundancies and combined two courses into a single course on intersectionality, opening space for a new, shared core course in the process. SFSU is also establishing program review policies to encourage departments to periodically take stock and prune course offerings with an eye to student learning and success. Lessons learned from the process have been captured by SFSU faculty in a "survival guide" for curricular change in a shared governance setting.

Virginia Wesleyan College now emphasizes the expansion of student participation in study away, undergraduate research and internships, and it is restructuring its curriculum around such high-impact practices. Most of the college's 33 liberal arts departments are engaged in curriculum mapping designed to make majors more transparent to students and show students how courses and co-curricular activities lead to culminating experiences like study away and undergraduate research that, in turn, connect to career opportunities. The curricular changes are being brought about through departmentwide revisions and substitutions, not additions, so they can be carried out by the current distribution of faculty. During the 2015-16 academic year, 74 percent of graduates completed at least one internship, study away or research project. This represents a steady increase since 2004-05, when 60

percent of graduates had completed at least one of the three high-impact practices.

Austin Community College is in the midst of developing guided pathways: highly defined, structured and coherent curricula leading to a postsecondary credential that is aligned to high-quality employment, either directly after community college or posttransfer after attainment of a bachelor's degree. On the liberal arts guided pathway, humanities faculty members are working to scale up a Great Books approach to teaching a mandated student success course for hundreds of transfer-bound students by engaging their peers, including those who may not have a background in the humanities. Eventually, this course may be adapted for students pursuing professional pathways like nursing.

As these examples show, curricular coherence takes different forms depending on the institutional context, but it is marked by collective responsibility for student learning and a desire to maximize scarce resources, including faculty time.

Instruction is the biggest cost driver at many institutions. In principle, nothing is wrong with this picture. But the biggest cost driver ought to combine quality with efficiency. When departments present an incoherent assortment of courses to satisfy degree requirements, use inexperienced and unsupported adjuncts to staff introductory courses, hire visiting faculty members to accommodate those on sabbatical, and let oversubscribed courses interfere with on-time graduation, students flounder and learning suffers.

The consequences of course proliferation and curricular inefficiency are borne not just by students and their families. They're borne by the institution -- in the form of lost tuition revenue and penalties from performance-funding initiatives now in place in the majority of states for public institutions. And they're borne by all of us, as public trust in higher education is eroded by the damaging perceptions that students are jumping through hoops rather than learning and that their professors -- with the protections of tenure and perks like sabbaticals -- are not helping.

Precisely because curriculum is within the control of faculty members, we have the opportunity to profoundly reshape students' college experiences for the better while also restoring the public's respect for faculty members and trust in higher education. ■

Bio:
Loni Bordoloi Pazich is program director at the Teagle Foundation.

https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/09/18/overcoming-obstacles-curricular-coherence-essay

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1015 18th St NW Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036
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